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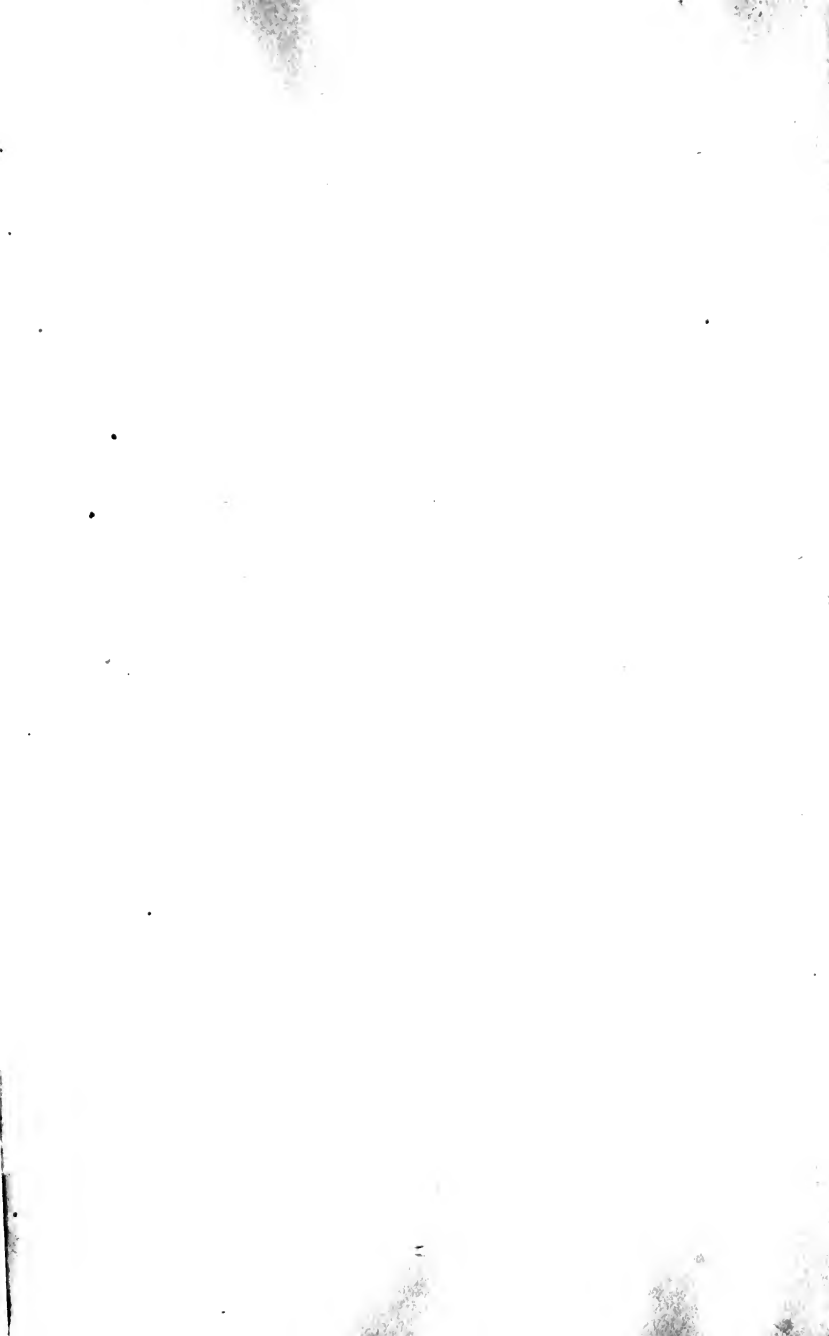
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BITTER SWEETS.

VOL. I.



BITTER SWEETS:

A LOVE STORY.

BY

JOSEPH HATTON.

THE web of our life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.—SHAKESPEARE.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would upset the brain, or break the heart.

WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

You remember the first grand party to which you were invited. You were to meet eminent men and women, who were amazingly clever. They would talk to you, and ask you strange questions. You had previously met several of them, in a quiet way, it is true; and once, when the wine had been freely circulated, you had ventured to tell a little story which had been tolerably well received. But this was very different to dining with my Lord Goldman, where you would be received beneath a great portico, and ushered into the hall by powdered and padded flunkeys; where you would have your name announced in a big voice, which would most probably pronounce it incorrectly, and make you hot and uncomfortable.

You cannot forget how you bowed, a little confusedly, under the flunkey infliction; how you took your seat nervously, between, perhaps, a bishop and a poet, or an artist and a millionaire, or a fashionable authoress and a states-

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man's wife; how eventually you discovered that the great people were only men and women after all; and how you found that they did not give themselves half the airs of the Smiths, Browns, and Robinsons, who had made their money as "butchers, and bakers, and candlestick makers," as the nursery books have it. You remember how you gradually felt so much at your ease that you actually dared to detain your plate, and finish that tender pheasant's wing, after the six feet of plush and impertinence had seized upon it.

These miscellaneous feelings of fear and doubt, and lack of self-confidence which you felt when you put your hand through your hair and followed Jeames to the reception room, afflict us now. We have been invited to a great party, a distinguished party, a critical party; we have dressed, made ready our "impromptu" jokes, and thought over our little story; our name has been announced. And now we make our bow timidly, and we hope modestly, as becomes us. We do not expect that the host will come forward and take us by the hand and introduce us as his intimate and worthy friend. We do not expect that eminent ladies and gentlemen, who are favourites in my Lord John Bull's great house, will rise to greet us. On the contrary, we shall be prepared to

hear whispers about our presumption in venturing to take a seat amongst such goodly company. It is upon this point that we are particularly nervous, because we feel our own unworthiness. But we have been invited to be present, and are here accordingly. We have, therefore, no apology to offer; we shall try to make ourselves agreeable; we have made our little jokes, and told our stories at parties of lesser magnitude; and we hope to discover, like the reader whom we have apostrophized, that our first grand party is not such a formidable affair as we had anticipated. If we do not behave ourselves properly we shall be snubbed, no doubt; if our jokes and our speeches, and the story that we have prepared, to come on with the port and the filberts, are not up to the ordinary standard we shall be pooh-poohed, and laughed at. With all modest deference, we make our bow, and submit to the critical ordeal, asking for no more consideration than others receive, and claiming no leniency on account of a first appearance.

To drop metaphor, let us say that we feel a proper diffidence in entering a field of literature so well occupied; but we have been encouraged to do so by the flattering reception which sundry unambitious stories and sketches have met with, at the hands of the critic and the public. If the story we have now to tell be

deemed worthy of the favourable recognition of the former, and helps the latter to a few hours of interesting reading, our purpose will be accomplished, and our ambition satisfied.

Of the tale itself we desire to say that bigamy is not its leading feature; that murder is not the pastime of the hero or heroine; that we have not written it with a view to its taking rank with any particular class of novels. Our purpose has been to produce a tale of sweets and bitters, healthy in tone and matter, and our highest aim to make the story interesting and in keeping with its title. We hope there is a moral in it; we hope it may do good, whilst it amuses and entertains; but we leave our readers to find out its lessons, and take to heart whatever they may consider the great moral to be.

Apologizing for this personal intrusion upon the reader's time and patience, we beg to say, in conclusion, that our work has been wrought out in the scant leisure hours of an active life of journalism; if it be successful, novel readers may hear of us again; if not, we shall endeavour to bear our disappointment with becoming resignation.

THE AUTHOR.

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BITTER SWEETS:

A LOVE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

MR MOUNTFORD AND HIS PRETTY WARD.

DENBY RISE looked out upon the sea, down a well-wooded glen. It was a cosy, pleasant, lonely house, of an imposing appearance. Its style of architecture approached nearer the Gothic than any other order. There were many gables about the house, and numerous windows in out-of-the-way places, with ivy creeping up to the sills from dark corners below. At the highest window you might see the white horses of the Atlantic, chasing each

other over ocean fields of green; from the lowest you could watch a little mountain stream trickle away by roots of trees, over pebbles, and round great boulders, into the bay, where it was frequently met by big waves that chased it back far up the glen.

The coast for several miles, on both sides of this valley, was rocky, picturesque, and dangerous. When the tide was at its height it made a long white wreath of foam at the base of the rocks; when it flowed back again it left all manner of weed-rimmed pools, full of curious things that darted from side to side, as if playing at hide and seek amongst the sea-weed which sheltered them. Half a mile from the valley, when the tide was out, it left a firm sandy beach, upon which the visitors at Helswick, a fashionable little watering-place, promenaded in gorgeous attire.

Denby Rise was the residence of Mark Mountford, Esq., who, starting life with excellent prospects, had retired early upon

a handsome fortune. At the commencement of our story he may be said to have entered the autumnal period of life, and we find him enjoying it to the full; at least as completely as any bachelor could be expected to enjoy it. A ripe scholar, a warm-hearted, intelligent man, he surrounded himself with things that were beautiful in Nature and Art; not with the pride of a mere collector, but with the delight and satisfaction of a man of educated taste, refined feelings, and understanding.

He had a pretty ward, this happy Mark Mountford, who was the sunshine of that gabled house in the valley: a ward with wavy hair and merry eyes, and a joyous laugh; a ward who had been bequeathed to him, some years prior to this our introduction, by her father (Mr Mountford's half-brother), who had died in India. What a happy fellow, having such a pleasant house rendered complete by a pretty niece whom he could watch over and care for!

And what a providential thing for Anna Lee to have such a guardian !

None of your growling, money-grubbing, jealous uncles, was Mr Mountford. He would listen to Anna for hours, whilst she conjured melodies, merry and sad, from piano or harp ; he would ride with her over the heath above the rocks ; he would throw pebbles, with her, into the sea ; help her to collect ferns ; botanize with her ; conchologize with her ; read with her ; and, in fact, they were quite companions. Wisdom joined hands with Youth and Beauty, and they walked together in pure friendship ; Mark's love for Anna having ripened into a deep paternal affection.

“ But I am serious, Anna dear,” said Mr Mountford one evening, after a pleasant ramble for ferns, and evidently in continuation of a conversation which Anna was inclined to treat lightly.

“ Nonsense, uncle ; why one would think you were what people call a match-

making mamma, to talk in such a fashion," said Anna laughing, in spite of Mr Mountford's seriousness.

"There! Now I must turn the tables upon you in earnest: it is your want of motherly advice and guidance, Anna, that I begin to regret deeply; not that you will perhaps feel that want, never having experienced the blessings of maternal care since you were old enough to know what a mother's love is."

Anna turned an inquiring face towards her uncle, who patted her head lovingly, and continued:

"The time may come, Anna—who knows how soon!—when your uncle will have followed to the grave that mother who died before you could lisp her name."

"Dear uncle!" exclaimed Anna, pressing the arm upon which she was leaning.

"We must not be afraid to think of these things, Anna. I love you too much to live on entirely in the present, as if our rambles were to last for ever. The time

will come, my darling, when you will need another guardian; and it is the hope of my declining years, Anna, that your next guardian shall be a husband worthy of your love."

As if he expected some reply, Mr Mountford paused here; but Anna held down her head, and the two walked on, in silence, until they entered the valley, and commenced the ascent to Denby Rise.

"Have you nothing to say, Anna?" at length Mr Mountford inquired, taking her hand.

"Don't let me hurt your feelings, dear uncle," said Anna smiling, "but I cannot really be serious about the matter. A husband, indeed! What should I do with a husband, uncle? and where is he to come from? You know what the miller of the Dee used to sing. Now, uncle, dear uncle, don't be so gloomy. Come in, and let us classify our ferns, and leave husbands to those who want them."

Seeing the shadow disappear from Mr

Mountford's countenance, Anna followed up her little victory with a little laugh, and shaking her ferns at her uncle, she said archly : " Why, uncle, *you* never married, and how can you have the conscience to want to marry me to somebody, when you have lived such a happy single life ? "

" Ah, that's a very different matter, my fairy ; but we will talk of this when you are inclined to be more thoughtful."

" Well, uncle, I will promise you, that when the good prince comes on his white palfrey, after the manner of poetry and romance, I will consider the state of my feelings."

Mr Mountford knew whom he would like that good prince to be, but he said no more ; and if he had mentioned Harry Thornhill's name, Anna would only have laughed, in downright earnest.

Perhaps you may think Anna treated too lightly the serious subject broached by her uncle ; but how could a young lady be expected to talk seriously about a husband,

when she loved her uncle better than anybody on earth? Had Mr Mountford introduced the subject of a future in which he would be no more, without coupling with it Anna married and settled, she might have continued in that serious mood which, for a moment, had mastered her buoyant spirits. Coming from a stupid boarding-school to Denby Rise, a few years previously, she had felt the change a delightful relief from Mrs Stiffintheback's establishment, and the bare contemplation of leaving it would have been as painful to her as the idea of a husband seemed absurd.

With Mr Mountford, however, Anna's future had for some time been a subject of serious consideration. Working hard at college when a young man, and afterwards in a professional career, he had contracted an affection of the heart, which he imagined might some day carry him off, with little or no warning. Not that this fancy of his troubled him on his own

account; for he never felt any ill effects from what he called his weak part, and if he could have been a chooser in the matter he would have preferred sudden death to any other; but the childless bachelor loved Anna with a fatherly tenderness, and her future cost him many an anxious thought. The tendrils of his kind good nature had wound themselves about the orphan girl, and it was the chiefest happiness of his declining years to protect and shelter her.

It had been the wonder of Helswick and the neighbourhood, for many a long year, that such a pleasant, genial gentleman as Mr Mountford had not married: but somehow or other he had never met a lady who had inspired him with the tender passion. There were sprightly spinsters in Helswick who still did not despair of making a conquest of the gallant grey-headed horseman who occasionally visited that gay locality. One gentle dame, who had dined with him at the Rector's, and

afterwards leaned on his arm to her own residence, had purchased a complete set of teeth, and ordered a new false front from London, on the strength of his polite request that she would not pass Denby Rise without calling. But the white teeth and the glossy curls of the animated Helswick spinster were quite lost upon Bachelor Mountford, who never had the slightest suspicion of the expense into which his courtesy had forced her; yet Mr Mountford considered himself wonderfully clever and far-seeing with regard to a match which he thought he was making between Harry Thornhill and his pretty ward.

And that night after the brief conversation we have recorded, he built up his hopes, and looked at them through the rippling, soothing melodies which seemed to flow from Anna's nimble fingers. Every musical phrase, every cadence, every change of key and touching modulation, had its impression on the pictures of the future which Mark Mountford made whilst

he sat listening to the charming pianist. He saw a fair bride hand in hand with Harry Thornhill; he heard the bells ring out the joyous message over the sea; he saw Anna a happy wife and mother.

A dead leaf floated through the open window, and that yellow waif of the dying year seemed to preach speed in the realization of these treasured hopes, ere the passing bell (which Mark Mountford also heard in imagination) should toll forth, in all its sad and mournful reality.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE SERVANTS' HALL.

JOE WITTLE was Squire Mountford's groom, and by virtue of his having been taken, as a boy, into his master's service about the time that Mr Mountford left the bar and came to Denby Rise, he was allowed to be an authority on all matters pertaining to the house of Mountford: and by virtue of his glib tongue and his merry ways, he was permitted to say many things which would never have been tolerated from any other quarter—even in the servants' hall. He was not a young man, though he was short in stature and juvenile in his movements. He had a seat somewhat taller than the others at the hall table, and from this

throne it was his wont, at meal times, to be oracular.

“Tell yer wot it is, Mrs Grey, tell yer wot it is, that ere gent, young Thornhill, has no notion how to put the halter on the young missis.”

“Indeed!” said Mrs Grey, the house-keeper, a woman whose slightly silvered curls only seemed to make her round matronly face look still more handsome,—“Indeed!”

“It’s no good a making yerself cheap wotever yer station in life; it’s my experience as you’ll get set down at perty near yer own value in this ere world: not as I means that my missis ain’t worth her weight in gold, and a ton of dimings to boot; but that ere young chap puts hissself down at too low a figure—I’m a telling yer!”

This latter remark was addressed to a somewhat oblivious “upper,” who, whilst he admired Joe’s “imperence,” as he called it, looked incredulous concerning

his philosophy. When Joe wished it to be understood that he was serious and did not mean to brook contradiction, he said "I'm telling yer," which was considered a complete settler of all doubts upon all subjects.

"I'm a telling yer; I've not studied human natur and horseflesh all my life for nothink; it's the same with a high-spirited lady as it is with a hoss, you must be kind with her, but spirited like herself, gentle, but not gentle. If I were to sit that 'ere brown cob of master's same as I do Harkaway as won the Ledger, with the bit atween her teeth, I should drive the poor cretur mad; and wicey wersa. I'm a telling yer;" and Joe shook his head knowingly at a shoulder of mutton, and said: Yes, he'd jest take a slice out of the hoff side.

Mrs Grey smiled, and despatched the slice to Joe, who saying that meat was meat only according as you cut it, proceeded with his dinner, nobody seeming

inclined to enter further upon a subject which none but Joe dared to have introduced. For Mrs Grey, it was known, had her own serious reasons for avoiding discussions on subjects relating to affairs of the heart, seeing that her own sad experience in that respect was a topic she had always shunned. George Grey, her husband, had deserted her, in a strange fashion, about three years after their marriage, leaving her with two children, both boys. Years had passed away without any tidings reaching her of his whereabouts, and she had only a faint suspicion as to the cause of his desertion.

Prior to her marriage, she had lived for a short time in the service of Mr Mountford, and when her husband had been away for more than a year she accepted the situation as housekeeper at Denby Rise. Her eldest son, Francis Grey, at the time of our story, was just entering upon his seventeenth year, and had obtained a situation, as junior clerk,

in a mercantile house at Maryport, whither Richard, his brother, was also to be sent in due time: so that Mrs Grey may be said to have got through her troubles pretty well, so far as mere worldly affairs were concerned; but she had loved, ay and still loved, her husband with a deep affection; and she still cherished the hope of seeing him again and ending her days with him. Her dark hair, it is true, had been touched with the white tinge of time and trouble, since she saw him last. The warmth and fire of youth had gone; but the woman's heart clung to its old affection, and Mrs Grey was ready, not only to forgive her husband for his desertion, but, if necessary, to find excuses for it.

When dinner was over, at which the preceding brief conversation took place, and when the whole of the servants had dispersed, Joe Wittle, sticking his right thumb into the right arm-hole of his long waistcoat, slid down from his high

seat, and looked seriously and significantly at Mrs Grey.

"Well! what is it, Joe?" asked Mrs Grey, in her kind mild fashion.

"You knows that ere Mat Dunkum?" he said, staring at her with his small piercing eyes.

"Yes, of course I do," said Mrs Grey, dropping her eyes, in some confusion, before Joe's rigid scrutiny.

"Of course you does! Well, marm, when I knows I've got a mangy screw or a wicious brute in one stable, I removes good horseflesh into the next, instanter; that's wot I does."

"I do not understand you," said Mrs Grey, looking puzzled and uncomfortable.

"And I takes espeeial care that on no accounts does a young hoss come a near that ere blighted un, as ain't even fit company for them as 'as cut all their teeth; that's yer style."

Joe took his right thumb out of his waistcoat, put both hands into the big

pockets of that said capacious garment, and looked still more fixedly at Mrs Grey.

“For goodness’ sake, Joe, don’t go on in that manner; tell me what you mean, and at once.”

“Evil communications corrupt good manners—Mat Dunkum ain’t a fit companion for Richard Grey. That’s wot I means, marm.”

“Nor are they companions that I am aware of,” said Mrs Grey, her flushed cheeks showing a sense of fear in her answer.

“I’m a telling yer, Mrs Grey: every night I sees ’em about the bay, round the corner where the caverns is. I know’d you couldn’t be aware of it, Mrs Grey,” continued the fellow in a kindlier tone, “so made bold to tell yer straight!” with which information Joe put on his little plush cap, which looked like a small limp helmet, and left Mrs Grey to her contemplations.

“Will that man never cease to per-

secute me," exclaimed Mrs Grey, sinking into a chair, the kind expression of her open countenance changing to one of fierce sadness.

"Great Heaven! why is my punishment so terrible? In what have I offended more than others that I should have this misery! O save my boy! Save him from the contamination of that wicked man!"

These and similar ejaculations the poor woman uttered, in a passion of grief—deep but whispered protests against the calamity which she feared in the association of her boy with Mat Dunkum.

Nevertheless, that evening, when Mat's well-known boat put into Denby cove, at sundown, Richard Grey was sitting in the bows, listening to Mat's specious yarns of adventure, and greedily drinking in the poison of his dark stories.

They were a remarkable contrast, this old sea shark, Mat Dunkum, and the young hopeful, blue-eyed lad, his companion.

Square-browed, with deep-set yet full black eyes, and a hard firm mouth, Mat's was by no means a prepossessing appearance. He was a well-built, well-knit fellow, tanned by the sun, and hardened by wind and weather. His dress was half pilot, half landsman's attire: he wore a rough fur cap, thick canvas trowsers, and a sort of cloth blouse, the collar of which was turned stiffly up. A knife, such as sailors wear, hung from a leather belt, which also supported a spirit flask. He was neither a young nor an old man, and looking at him intently you would rather be inclined to say that the disagreeable and dangerous expression of his face was the result of a hard and perilous life, rather than the sign of innate wickedness. And when you heard him relate some of his adventures, he had such a rough catching sort of eloquence that you would give him the benefit of the doubt, and vote him not so bad as he looked.

Richard Grey was a lad of fourteen,

with an open candid face, sanguine blue eyes, short curly hair, and the limbs of a young Hercules. He wore a light smock, fastened by a belt, in which was stuck, for the *nonce*, an old flint pistol which Mat had given him as a plaything, telling him how, years ago, it had shot a custom-house officer, who had made himself obnoxious to a smuggler chief under whom Mat had served his apprenticeship.

“Now, Dick, look out ahead,” said Mat, putting the boat before the wind, and running her straight for a few yards of shingly beach lying at the mouth of a cavern.

The waters tapped and gurgled musically about the prow; whilst the boat, like a living thing, leaped forward on her way, and just as Mat lowered the great square sail, bounded on to the beach. It was only the work of a few minutes to haul her up, high and dry, and then man and boy disappeared within the cavern, Richard Grey bearing in a telescope,

which he carried proudly under his arm, whilst Mat eyed him with a look of evident satisfaction.

A ruddy gleam from the setting sun came across the sea, touched the boat as she lay on her side, reddened the overhanging rocks, glimmered on a few shells and pebbles, put golden feathers into a sea-bird's wing, and followed Mat and the boy, like an inquiring glance from heaven.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAVERNS.

THIS cavern, in Denby cove, was one of a series of caverns which perforated the rocks at the extremity of a series of little bays of the most romantic character.

Shut out from the great world by land and sea, with the voice of the ocean ever present there, and the big waters joining the sky in the hazy distance, bays and caves would have formed a fitting resort for those bright fair creatures who, according to ancient mythology, left their submarine halls to repose on the shore at certain periods of the day.

Here one might picture the Sicilian shepherd meeting Galatea; and when the sun disappeared, the great black rocks

which rose up to the clouds, tall and jagged, would have done for Cyclopean enemies.

But whether the Naiades floated in there, or came on their dolphin-horses to dance on the golden beach, or not, we will venture to assert that Mat Dunkum never troubled his head about them. His thoughts were chiefly concerning spirits, it is true, but spirits of a very different character. They had the power, however, to conjure up strange ghosts and memories in Mat's brain. On one occasion he nearly frightened little Dick Grey out of his wits, by swearing that he had seen a dead custom-house officer turn a corner of one of the water-logged caverns which, unapproachable by land, was ever in the possession of the sea. The water rolled into it, with a roar of thunder, and came out again with a sigh of disappointment, as if it had sought for vengeance on some intruder and found nothing upon which to wreak its power.

But on the evening when we follow Dick Grey and his friend into the Denby cavern Mat had no spirits aboard, in any sense of the term ; for some two years, in fact, he had been unable to land any on the Helswick coast, which at one time was a favourite resort for smugglers.

Mat had, therefore, turned his attention to illicit manufacture, and had found in that a substitute for the more profitable trade of introducing brandy, duty free, into her Majesty's dominions. How he lived few knew, and few cared to inquire ; indeed, there were not many inhabitants about that part of the coast, which he frequented, to take any interest in his proceedings. He had a little cottage in an unfrequented nook not far from the caverns ; but he was seldom to be found at home. He lived mostly in the cave, which was much more snug than anybody was aware of, and which needed no locks and bars, because it was unapproachable except by boat—unless you knew where to find

a certain secret stair only accessible when the tide was out.

Sometimes inquisitive visitors from Helswick, seeking zoophytes or marine algæ, or hunting for the eggs of the birds which congregated on the shelvings of the rocks, ventured into the little bay and sought out Mat, who was very glad to show them the place and tell them stories of the marvellous depths of the caverns, and of the ships which had been wrecked there. But Mat never took them into the inner recesses of what he called his Marine Palace. In fact he told young Grey that he was "the only man besides himself" who had ever been into his little parlour; and you may be sure Mat knew who had been there, for none but he held the clue that led through the outer mazes of the inner recesses.

Yet this "parlour" was not very difficult of access. When you entered the mouth of the cavern you were in the outer hall, which had ferns growing about its

roof, and little pools of clear water lying amongst the broken rocks upon the floor. As you proceeded, the cavern became narrower, and by and by you came to a larger pool left by the tide, which entered it, like a watchman, twice in every four-and-twenty hours. It was a deep pool reflecting the lowering roof of the cave with its lichens, and strange bits of gray and brown and green colouring. And here the cavern appeared to terminate; but when Mat and the boy arrived at this spot, Mat went to the side of the cave, mounted a tall rough piece of rock, raised his hand to a concealed rope, and down fell a short plank across the pool, over which the two stepped. When they reached the other side, the plank was raised, and after a slight ascent, and a turn to the right by another plank, Richard entered a rough archway. Mat had to stoop low to follow. And then "the parlour" was reached. It was a small apartment, made by nature and fashioned by

art. The walls had been chipped, and, here and there, little recesses were hewn for shelves. The furniture consisted of a table, two chairs, and a rough couch covered with rugs and coats, and a bear's skin. Above the couch hung a fowling-piece and two old swords, flanked by a shot pouch and belt. In a recess, hard by, were implements for cooking, a horn-tumbler, a bottle, a couple of oars, an old net, and a cask; a boat-hook lay behind the entrance-door, and a large sea-chest occupied the opposite corner.

Mat struck a light, closed a rough door over the entrance, drew over this a heavy piece of canvas, and lighted a hanging lamp which threw a yellow glimmer upon the objects just enumerated.

“Now, my lad, sit down and we'll just have one smack of the liquor before you're off to Helswick,” said Mat, unbuttoning his coat, throwing back the collar, and taking down the bottle and horn-tumbler from the recess.

“I don’t think I can stand another,” said Dick laughing, and laying down his telescope.

“Stand another!” exclaimed Mat, throwing back his head and gazing at Richard with what he intended the boy to think was a look of great admiration—
“Stand another! Why, Dick, you’ll have to stand no end afore you’re a real rover: toss it off.”

The boy took the opaque vessel and emptied it, in token of which he gave a little cough and shook his head; for the liquor was strong and pungent.

“What do they learn you at school, Dick?” said Mat, lighting a short pipe, and sitting astride an old chair.

“O, I don’t know,” said Dick carelessly, pulling the old pistol out of his belt, “not much.”

“Don’t learn you to shoot, I guess, or drink brandy—Eh?” and Mat laughed aloud.

“No,” said Dick, enjoying the joke;

“nor to sail a boat. But,” added the boy suddenly, “what will mother say when she knows?”

“What will she say when you’ve made a fortune, Dick?—Eh, boy? what’ll she say then?”

“When I’m master of my own ship,” continued the boy, entering at once into the golden thought which Mat had prompted.

“Never you mind what nobody says. Did the Rover chiefs and smuggler captains care? For the matter of that did Lord Nelson, as was a British General and wopped the French, care what his mother said? I should think not. And didn’t I know your father, and worn’t we mates? But you had better be off now, Dick.”

The boy laid the pistol on a shelf, and prepared to leave.

“Good-bye, Dick; remember the pass word,” said Mat, shaking hands with the youth and opening the canvas and wooden doorway.

“Good night, captain,” said Richard Grey, looking up at Mat with a smile of admiration, and stepping down the plank which was lowered as the door opened.

“Remember your oath, Dick; and we divide our spoils on Monday.”

“All right, sir.”

“Go the old way—turn up the cleft and over the top—walk fast and you’ll be at Helswick in half an hour.”

“Yes, sir,” said Dick, crossing the second plank.

“Good night!”

“Good night,” said Dick in return, and the cavern walls repeated the parting words to each other, over and over again, until Mat raised the narrow bridge and shut himself once more in his parlour.

“Ah,” he said, sitting down again and filling another measure of brandy, “you’ll remember turning me off for that sneak George Grey, my fine girl, yet! Mat Dunkum’s not to be snubbed for nothing.”

Hardly had Mat reseated himself when

a faint cry of distress arrested his attention.

“Humph! what the devil’s that! one o’ my bright fancies, or what? No, there it is again.”

Extinguishing the light, Mat crept noiselessly to the door and posted himself outside, when he speedily discovered that he had forgotten to draw up the first plank-approach to his parlour.

“Why, there’s somebody in the water hanging on by the plank.”

“Hi there!” presently said a voice in evident alarm; “Hallo! murder! fire! thieves!—ain’t there nobody to rescue a fellow screecher from an untimely hend.”

Then the head which Mat had observed at the top of the water became erect, and gradually rose higher; then by dint of much struggling a human figure scrambled out of the pool, and once more stood upon the plank.

“I’ve a good mind to pitch him in again, the infernal spy,” said Mat to him-

self, as he crept round and swung himself by a rope into a recess, on the other side of the pool.

“What on earth was that?” said the drenched and shivering individual on the plank; “if it we’rnt just like a heagle a flying past, my name ain’t Joe Wittle, or else a ghost—Joseph, get hout of this while there’s life in yer.”

And Joe Wittle accordingly, going down upon his hands and knees, crept back along the plank; but before he had reached the end, the frail bridge began gradually to rise into the air.

“Murder! fire! oh, Lord! oh dear! why I’m agoin’ up like the hacters in the pantermime! But I’ll not neither,” added poor Joe, seizing the plank with both hands, and dropping into the water beneath, with astonishing dexterity.

“I know’d it wouldn’t be a drowning matter so near the hedge,” said Joe, quietly walking out of the water, and making the best of his way through what Mat

called his outer hall. "It's the devil's cave this, and not being one of his himps, this child aint agoin' to risk his precious neck in it again in a hurry, to look hafter Richard Grey or any other urching, sea-urching, or otherwise."

"Take care yer don't!" said Mat between his teeth, and between a pair of ugly rocks which hid him and his rope from Joe Wittle; whilst the half-drowned groom shook himself sadly, wrung the wet out of his limp helmet, and made a joke at his own expense:

"Why I'm hackcherly *drippin'*; yes, and I oughter be well *basted* too for comin' on such a hexpedition as this, aprying into haffairs as don't concern me."

Leaving Joe Wittle to get home as he can, let us glance, for a few minutes, at Richard Grey, clambering over rock and ferny brake on his short cut to Helswick, where he had been placed by his mother in charge of an old woman who had

educated half the tradesmen in the town, up to the time that they went to have "the finishing touches put in" by a professor of reading and writing belonging to the other sex.

Every now and then Dick stops to stare at the sea, and to wonder how far off are those marvellous islands of which Mat has told him; and to picture to himself the smuggler king in "the bonny bark" referred to in one of Mat's songs.

Puffins, razor-bills, and a variety of other tenants of the rocks, start up at his feet, whenever he disturbs the loose stones amongst the ferns, and screech and scream above the waters below, where the sea thunders and roars amongst the caverns. The sun sinks deeper and deeper, and the moon begins to show a white crescent in the clouds.

At length the spire of Helswick church rises amongst some old elms, in company with gray walls, and glimmering windows; and then Dick, pausing at the curlew's

painful cry, and wondering where it has built its nest, dashes into a patch of green meadows, skirts a churchyard, and cautiously enters a respectable-looking cottage.

“Oh, Dick! Granma is so angry with you for staying out longer than you said you would,” exclaims a girl of about Dick’s own age—a girl with dark hair hanging, in clusters, about her brown healthy face, and setting off the lustre of a pair of hazel eyes.

“Where is she?” inquires Richard Grey.

“Gone into the school-room; and you had better go to bed before she comes in.”

“I shan’t, Bess,” Dick curtly replies.

“Oh do, there’s a dear, because you know Granma is so cross, and Dick, dear, I’ll slip up with some bread and milk for you.”

And the little maid takes Dick affectionately by the arm and leads him to the staircase, when up Dick goes without more

ado. And just when he was in bed and thinking of the old flint pistol and the grand secret of Mat's glorious cavern, Bessie Martin stole gently into the room with a bowl of milk with pieces of bread swimming about in it.

"Bess!" exclaimed Dick, "when I'm a smuggler chief you shall be my queen, and we'll have a castle on a rock with caverns underneath filled with gold, and silver, and diamonds."

Bessie opened her big black eyes, and stared with astonishment at the boy, as he raised himself up in bed, to add emphasis to his declaration.

"Why, you are dreaming, Richard!" said Bessie.

"Am I, though? you'll see if I'm dreaming some day."

And Bessie Martin had cause to remember the dreaming of Richard Grey.

CHAPTER IV.

HARRY THORNHILL'S WOOING.

EVERYBODY knows Beckford Square in Maryport, the square which was the scene of riot and bloodshed in an unsettled period of English history; a square with custom-houses in it, and tax offices, and banks, and brokers' establishments; a square where sailors, and men with big whiskers, and short-coated, keen-eyed fellows jostle well-fed, well-to-do merchants and citizens; a square with carts and cabs continually chasing each other on all its four roads; a square which seldom sees the sun, though the wind comes there occasionally with whispers about the big sea at the end of the river.

The most extensive establishment in

this famous business resort was that of Welford & Company, the eminent shippers; and of all the men who went in and out, the best fellow, we should say, was Harry Thornhill, the junior partner. And so thought the junior clerk, Francis Grey, who had been introduced there by Mr Thornhill.

At ten minutes to four on the Friday following the conversation between Anna Lee and her uncle, Mr Thornhill looked at his watch, laid down his pen, and rang his bell for Francis Grey, to make a weekly inquiry, which had little variation. It was this:

“Well, Francis, I am going down to Denby Rise, have you any message?”

“My love to my mother, sir,” said Francis, with a pleased and satisfied smile.

“May I say you are still comfortable?” inquired the junior partner.

“Yes, sir; but I shall be glad when Richard is old enough to come.”

“Oh, oh,” said Mr Thornhill, pleas-

antly, "looking for promotion, Frank; think the firm could do with another junior clerk."

It was very seldom that Mr Thornhill said anything that was jocular; he was always in good spirits, but never boisterous; seldom given to saying what he did not mean: and this little approach to a joke, at Frank's expense, was immediately accepted as a gentle rebuke.

"Oh, no indeed, sir," said Frank blushing, "I hope you don't think so meanly of me!"

"Meanly," said the junior partner, quietly, "I don't see anything mean in seeking promotion, Frank."

"It would be mean, after you have given me a good situation, for me to try and drag my brother in, sir, for the sake of advancing myself," said Frank earnestly.

"Don't make yourself uneasy, Frank; I did but joke with you; promotion will follow a careful performance of duty."

“But it will never come,” thought Frank, “if it waits until I ask for it.”

“Then you’ve nothing more to say, Frank?”

“No, sir; except if I might make so bold as to send my remembrances to Mr Mountford,” said Frank, deferentially.

“If you may make so bold! I don’t see anything bold in such an act of courtesy, Frank. You are not afraid of Mr Mountford?”

“Not afraid! no, sir, I’m not afraid of anybody,” said Frank, raising his head somewhat proudly.

“Then why say, if you may make so bold?”

“I shouldn’t like him to think I was too familiar, sir; that I was trespassing on his kindness.”

“Well, perhaps you’re right: I will see to it, Frank. Have you read the books I gave you?”

“Yes,” said Frank.

“The poems also?”

“I have, sir.”

“And you like them?”

“Very much, sir.”

“And you won’t let fiction put fact out of your head: you’ll remember that to make a good business man you must study the works I gave you, on trade and commerce and political economy.”

“Oh yes, sir.”

And as Mr Thornhill rose, Frank backed out, and went to his little desk in the great counting-house below.

Mr Thornhill was not a handsome young man; but his features bore the stamp of a happy disposition. He was above the medium height, and had a manly look. He was one of those good-natured young fellows, who are sometimes picked up by designing women and turned into miserable fools; one of those soft-hearted men, who fall desperately in love with the wrong woman, and only discover their error when it is too late to remedy the mistake.

Harry Thornhill was in love, and in selecting Anna Lee, as the object of his affections, he had made a mistake—not, however, the common error of many men of his disposition—not the mistake of selecting a woman unworthy of his love; but the error of choosing a woman who did not love him in return. Anna Lee liked him, it is true, and was very glad to see him on his excursions to Denby Rise; but she did not weave one extra band of hair in his honour, nor take one additional peep at her glass before shaking hands with him in the drawing-room. There was no conscious flush on her cheek, no flutter at her heart, when he came, such as lovers feel; but Harry was satisfied with her frank reception, with her smile of welcome; and Mr Mountford himself took pleasure in seeing, in all this, tokens of the success of his scheme. For Harry had been in the habit of visiting Mr Mountford even before Anna Lee came to Denby Rise; and when the young lady arrived

Mr Mountford saw no reason for putting an end to the monthly trip which Harry had usually made to Denby. Indeed, as Mr Mountford grew older and felt his affection for Anna increasing, he entered into a plot for marrying her to the only man whom in all the wide world he thought worthy of her: and so Harry Thornhill became a weekly visitor to Denby Rise.

It was necessary, however, at the period when our story begins, that the wooing, such as it was, should be brought to a crisis; at least Mr Mountford thought so.

“You know, my boy,” said the old man, after carefully closing the library door and sitting down exactly opposite to Harry, “you know this sort of thing cannot go on for ever.”

“I almost wish it could,” said Harry in his quiet way.

“But it cannot; and the sooner you settle upon the day, the better for us all.”

“Ah, I am afraid I have made less

progress than you think, Mr Mountford," said Harry despondingly.

"Progress, man! Do you love the girl, Harry? Is there anything in the world you could put into competition with the happiness of making her your wife?"

"Love her!" exclaimed Harry, with an energy inspired by the subject, and excited by the warmth of his old friend. "Love her, sir! she is in all my thoughts, and if I had not her to love, why, sir, the world would be one huge counting-house filled with maps and bills of lading, and accounts of ships' stores. And to make her my wife, Mr Mountford, would be to me more happiness than all the poets ever dreamed of in their sunniest moments."

"Bravo! God bless you, Harry! You shall have her?" and the old man rose to shake hands with his guest.

"But, Mr Mountford," said Harry, sadly yet firmly, "I would willingly lose all this happiness could your niece not share it."

“Not share it! What do you mean, Harry?”

“I mean, sir, that our affection must be mutual. I could never expect her to love me as I love her; but there could be no marriage without her full consent, without she cared for me, without—”

“Confound it, Harry, don’t be so full of buts and withouts and ifs. Talk to Anna as you have talked to me; tell her your feelings with regard to her as you have described them to me, and she is yours.”

But here was the difficulty. Harry could *not* talk to Anna as he could talk to Mr Mountford. Had he cared less about her he might have said many a complimentary trifle,—baits that men throw out to women. Quiet and gravely happy as Harry usually was, many a pretty saying had nevertheless fallen from his lips in the best society in Maryport. He had even gone so far, one day, as to send a sugar merchant’s daughter into a flutter

of admiration at his apt quotations from Moore and Byron; but Anna Lee occupied in his thoughts a pedestal too high to be assailed with glib poetic extracts, and his love was too deep to be mooted, except in solemn words which Anna never gave him an opportunity to utter.

However, he had determined, after the last conversation with Mr Mountford, to ask Anna Lee an important question, before he went to Maryport on Monday; for he had arranged to make the journey back in "The Fairy," a yacht of Paul Massey's, which would be off Helswick on Monday morning.

"We went to Eton together, Paul and I," said Harry to Miss Lee and her uncle, as they were walking home on the Saturday night after a ramble on the beach. "He is one of the best fellows in the world; he was the head of the school in everything."

"And what has he been doing all these years since?" inquired Mr Mountford.

“Oh, he’s been all over the world since I saw him; he’s been in nearly every sea with this same yacht.”

“And where does he live when he is at home?” inquired Miss Lee.

“Somewhere in the North, near the Tees. His father died about two years ago; he was a ship-builder of great eminence.”

“Will there not be time for us to show him some little hospitality?” Mr Mountford asked.

“I’m afraid not,” said Harry, “though I should very much like you to know him, he’s such a merry clever fellow. I have had only a few letters from him; but they all read just as he talks, crisp and smart, and interesting, and are full of adventures.”

“Was it he who rescued the woman from the fire that you told me of?” inquired Anna.

“It was,” said Harry; “but he’s done many a more gallant thing than that, since then, I’ll be bound.”

"He ought to be the hero of a book," said Anna, smiling.

"There's many a book, I can assure you, Miss Lee, with heroes not half so heroic as my old friend Paul."

Harry Thornhill felt at home in this theme, and had such a thorough regard for his old school companion that he talked of little else during the evening walk.

Mr Mountford, once or twice, dashed in to create a diversion; but somehow or other Harry always managed to return to the yacht and its owner, and Anna said it was as good as reading a novel to hear Harry tell stories of Mr Massey's adventures.

So Harry went on and related incidents of school which were certainly entertaining; but it was not diplomatic of Harry to set Anna Lee thinking about Paul Massey. For, to tell the truth, there were features in Paul's character, as Harry drew it, which were attractive

to Miss Lee, and they were the very features which Harry's character lacked.

Anna Lee was of a romantic turn of mind ; she had read with Mr Mountford, and her ardent nature had readily caught the touches of the great masters whom they studied. If she had had a mother to turn this reading, this strengthening of the imagination, this developing of the intellect, into those channels which—under careful guidance—lead, in woman, to a cultivation of the home affections, and a preparation for the true fulfilment of woman's mission, Anna Lee might have recognized and loved the sterling and the solid in Harry Thornhill's character.

Truth to tell, Joe Wittle was not far wrong in his homely illustration of the weak point in Harry Thornhill's wooing. He put himself down at too low an estimate, and Miss Lee was not wise enough to judge of his intrinsic merits. But what has love to do with merit? "What," as Goethe once said to a friend

who, in speaking of a beautiful girl, said he was almost in love with her, though her understanding was by no means brilliant—"what has love to do with understanding?"

The wisest have been chained in silken cords weaved by the most foolish: and so it will be to the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER V.

A MEMORABLE SUNDAY.

A FANCIFUL old gentleman who, many years before our story, lived near Helswick, had presented the churchwardens with a set of silver bells for the Sunday chimes, believing that the pure silver would transmit a clearer and more distinct sound than any other metal, and that he would thus be enabled to hear the chimes at his country mansion, some miles distant.

It was these silver bells which began their peaceful harmonies on this Sunday morning of our story, and which, to Harry Thornhill, seemed to whisper sweet words of hope and happiness.

The chimes had not to travel so far, to

reach Denby Rise, as they had to journey when they gladdened the ears of the good old Churchman of years and years ago. Making their way to Denby, they began their drowsy journey at a bend of the coast, travelling over a shining bay, in company with the gentle murmuring hum of the little town. Occasionally, the mournful cry of the sea-gull went with them, and thrilling triplets fell from the lark's loud song, piped high above some distant meadows; then the chimes mounted the heights, on the opposite side of the little bay, feeling their way about many rocky corners, and whispering to the birds as they sat on the stony ledges; and, finally, creeping slowly through some echoing chasm, and travelling onwards, over meadows and through corn-fields, mingling with the croak of the landrail, and the lowing of herds, and the mocking tinkle of sheep-bells; and, finally, flowing gently into the open windows of Denby Rise, with the hum of the bee, and the

scent of flowers, and the solemn music of the ocean.

Harry Thornhill heard the chimes as he lingered over Paul Massey's last letter, thinking of his school days, and wondering if Paul still loved the pretty girl whom he used to rave about, every Sunday after church. Then the thought of the silver bells, which poets associate with marriage, brought with it a thousand fancies about Anna Lee, a thousand hopes with each one of which she was associated.

Tinkling, murmuring, singing, whispering, the silver chimes touched the secret springs of memory, and set Harry busy with his own history and the object of his ambition. His life had flowed onwards like a smooth river, shadowed now and then by family sorrows, but never flowing out of the sunshine of affluence. No want, within reasonable compass, could disturb his pleasure. He had the wherewithal to purchase every comfort, and was his own master. But for two years he had been

living a life of greater happiness and greater misery than he had ever known—the happiness of being in love, and the misery of its doubts and fears. He had scarcely known that he loved Anna Lee until Mr Mountford spoke to him on the subject, and the mention of the possibility that some day Anna might leave them both, for a husband's roof, made Harry feel how much he loved her. His friend's ward had grown into a woman before Harry was hardly aware of it, and from this time Harry's manner towards Anna changed. Ever quietly attentive to her, he now seemed to anticipate her every want; he increased his twelve visits in the year to fifty-two; and had Mr Mountford's consent to win her if he could. So far, he thought he had succeeded in gaining her esteem and regard, though he feared he had not that place in her affections which her uncle believed in. But within twenty-four hours, from the time that the chimes crept through the ivy leaves up into his

room, he was to know all ; he was to ask that momentous question which is so often made the subject of mirth, so often spoken of lightly, but which, after all, is the most important question man can ask, or woman answer.

The Sabbath chimes found Anna Lee sitting against the open window of her dressing-room, with a volume of Cowper ; but Anna's thoughts were out upon the ocean, and as varied as the shadows which passed over it, and as mixed-up as the seaweed-drift, which rose and fell, in entangled clumps, in jagged corners of the jagged rocks, near the Denby caverns. Her uncle, after their walk with Harry on the previous evening, had insisted upon leading her out alone amongst the shrubs at the back of the house, and talking to her seriously about the future, and he had not only again spoken of a coming time when she ought to have the protection of a husband, but he had

hinted at the claims which Harry Thornhill had upon her consideration.

A woman is seldom blind to the admiration of one who loves her. She is quick to discover by whom she is liked, and by whom she is disliked. Anna was no exception to the rule. She knew that Harry admired her, but she had never guessed at the strength of Harry's love for her; because, not loving in return, she had never cared to make herself master of his feelings. So that when she told Mr Mountford that he had surprised her by his serious ambassadorship in the interest of Harry as a lover, she spoke the whole truth; and Mr Mountford was not less truthful when he, in return, expressed his surprise at her apparent ignorance of Harry's love.

Anna, however, confessed that she liked Mr Thornhill very much, and then, by a little exercise of womanly dexterity, succeeded in closing the conversation,

leaving Mr Mountford hopeful but uncertain.

Anna thought all this over, as the chimes lingered about the open window, and somehow or other the silver bells seemed to whisper the name of Paul Massey ; and the sea too had something to say about this hero whom Harry Thornhill worshipped. All that poetry, and romance, and history had taught her to admire in man seemed to assume definite shape in Harry's school companion, though she had never seen him. Brave, generous, high-spirited, adventurous, a traveller, and handsome ; Harry had drawn his picture with a glowing pencil, and had put in a dash of the mysterious which could not fail to make Paul attractive to a girl like Anna Lee.

The chimes found Mrs Grey in conversation with Joe Wittle, in the house-keeper's room.

“ It ain't no use a chimin' in here, old

silver bells ; for I'm werry glad to hinform yer that Denby Rise don't go to church of a mornin' ; we leaves hour devotions until arternoon, when we can cut the sermin, which is a cut not exactly wot the parson likes ; but he's a werry jolly un, and he cuts and comes again under our mahogany—so we're good churchmen arter all."

"Don't be so trivial, Joe ; you need not talk to the bells," said Mrs Grey.

"That's the werry thing my guvner said I'd better not do when we was young together, and doing the fast in the West-End," said Joe, winking his wickedest wink at Mrs Grey, his wickedest wink being a very harmless distortion of his right cheek.

"If we do not go to church in a morn-ing, Joe Wittle, we may at least remember that it is Sunday—the day which was hal-lowed by Him who made this beautiful world in which we live," replied Mrs Grey, gravely.

"Well, marm, if it weren't Sunday, I

should say as how the maker of them ere caverns, 'tother side the bay, might just ha' put a few steps on the outside, so as a feller needn't run the risk of dislocating his neck in getting in; and, at the same time, I don't see that it was exactly necessary to put the ocean inside as well as out," said Joe, putting a thumb into each arm-hole of his waistcoat, and fixing his inquiring eyes on a portrait, in black, over the dresser.

"Joseph!" exclaimed Mrs Grey.

"I'm a telling yer," was Joe's reply; "and, if it weren't Sunday, I should also inform you that the devil may run away with caverns and contents afore Joe Wittle goes a-prying about them again: so there, marm."

"Well, but, Joe, it was not my fault that you got wet."

"Wet, marm! Drowned! Haunted! Why, I was a-flying about on planks, and a-swimming in wells, and a-breaking my neck over rocks, till I was werry nigh a

committin' soocide to get out of my difficulties."

"And yet you say you saw Richard, and that—that—?"

"Mat Dunkum?"

"Yes, that Mat Dunkum go in together?" said Mrs Grey, with evident emotion.

"See 'em? Yes, I see 'em go in, in a boat; but, Mrs Grey, let us be serious about this affair: just let me into your secret, and then I'll—"

"Secret!" exclaimed Mrs Grey, "I have no secret, Joe; what do you mean?"

"Well, I'd no meanin' in perticler, only I've heard as Mat was a werry great pal of your husband's, and that—"

"Nonsense, Joe," said Mrs Grey, pressing her feet hard upon the floor, and biting her lips.

"Well, you might let me finish afore you says nonsense, 'cause it ain't manners to hinterrupt, and if wot I've heard ain't true, why then, as the judge on the bench

says, it ain't, and the jury will therefore leave it out of their consideration. But, as I was a sayin', this Dunkum was a pal of Mr Grey's, and was werry savage as how he was not the happy man himself. On this point, gentlemen of the jury, hevidence will be called ;" and Joe raised his little head, threw back one side of an imaginary gown, put his right hand into his right-hand waistcoat-pocket, and waited for Mrs Grey's reply.

Overcome with her own thoughts, and her fears for her boy, Mrs Grey could no longer stop her tears, at sight of which Joe Wittle began to change his manner, and to explain, in a roundabout way, that he did not mean any harm, and that he had no doubt it was all lies, and that if he could do anything for Mrs Grey he should only be too glad—if she didn't require him to play at see-saw with the devil over a pool of water, which was a sort of thing he could *not* stand.

"It is partly true," said Mrs Grey,

after a pause, "and if you were to think a moment, Joe, you would now see why that man wishes to ruin my boy, as I am sure he does. Right or wrong, God knows which, I believe he robbed me of my husband; but, Joe, never speak of this, it is a painful subject, and I have suffered, nobody knows how much."

"All right, marm—don't mention it—Joe Wittle may be blunt, Joe Wittle may be rude in speech, but Joe Wittle's a man of honour, Mrs Grey, and at your command."

"Then, Joe," said Mrs Grey, seizing the groom by the hand, "you shall show me this cavern."

"Lor' bless your heart," exclaimed Joe, "you'd have no chance without a boat; and then, Lor' bless yer, it might turn into a swinging boat like you sees at fairs, the only difference being as you'd most likely come down topsy-turvy, and have a werry wet welcome at the end of it. But I'll show you the caverns, for all that, marm."

The bells had rung for the evening service, and the Mountford family had returned from Helswick church, soothed by the solemnly beautiful ritual of the Establishment.

The sun was going down into the sea, and yet Harry had not said to Anna what he had intended.

There are many strange notions about what we may, and what we may not, do on Sunday; and one of the excuses which occurred to Harry for further postponing his question to Anna was a rising doubt whether or not there might be a religious objection to his asking a lady to marry on a Sunday.

Poor Harry! he had a presentiment that he would be unsuccessful in his wooing, and all sorts of promptings to put off the knowledge he feared to have, and yet longed to obtain, crept into his mind.

But the opportunity came, ere the evening was much older, and Harry

Thornhill determined to avail himself of it. Why should he fear? He loved Anna with all his heart, was her equal in position, and there was nothing she could ask of him that he would not grant.

"Miss Lee, I wish to have a few words of serious talk with you," he said, finding Anna sitting alone at the drawing-room window.

"Indeed, Harry. Well, that is nothing new," said Anna with a little mocking laugh, "you are always talking seriously."

Anna, with a woman's instinct, guessed Harry's mission this evening, and was bent upon making it too difficult for accomplishment.

"If I had had no particular regard for you, Miss Lee, I might have said foolish and flippant things to you a thousand times," said Harry, approaching the window.

"Really, Harry, I wish you had, just for a change," said Anna, smiling archly.

He felt sure that he would be refused.

There was something in Anna's manner which seemed to be defiance. She was evidently preparing herself to repel an attack. But he would know his fate now.

"Anna, when a man loves, he is too much bent on winning the respect and esteem of her he loves, to lower his manliness, in her presence, with the flippant badinage which he may bestow elsewhere," said Harry, with honest warmth.

This was more than Anna had expected, and she looked deep into the petals of a flower on her bosom, and wondered what she should say next.

Harry paused for a moment, and went on, in a fashion that completely upset Anna's plan of meeting him with irrelevant little nothings—weapons which women use so effectively.

"Anna Lee," said Harry, quietly taking her hand, "it is now nearly four years since we first saw each other; to me the last two of these have been my happiest years, except whenever the shadow of a

doubt about what the end of our acquaintance might be, has clouded the delight of these treasured visits of mine to Denby Rise."

Anna moved as though she would speak, but remained silent, with her hand passively lying in Harry's tender keeping. Then, for the first time, it dawned upon her that she had trifled with an honest warm affection, and she felt humbled by this sudden declaration of its presence.

"These words, Anna, have been on my lips a thousand times, struggling for utterance; but I have put them off till this moment with the intention of showing you, in other ways, how much, how tenderly I love you."

"Oh, why did you not tell me this before, Mr Thornhill?" said Anna, withdrawing her hand and bursting into tears.

"Had I thought it painful to you to hear it now, Anna," said Harry, struggling with emotion, but losing none of his man-

liness, though the *Mister Thornhill* of Anna gave darker colour to his fears, "I would have held my peace for ever. May I not hope, Anna? may I not some day call this hand mine?"

Harry regained the hand which had been withdrawn, and looked up into Anna's tearful face. At length, with an effort which evidently cost her great pain, Anna said:

"I have been much to blame—I feel it deeply; but, indeed, I did not know of this, never dreamt that—"

Anna never found it so difficult in her life before, to say what she meant; never felt so serious or so unhappy.

"Spare me, Harry! Do forgive me! As a brother, Harry, as a dear friend, I shall always love you; but, but—"

"Don't be afraid, Anna; let me have the whole truth," said Harry, though he felt as if his heart were breaking; "can you love me?—not as I love you, Anna, but could you love me as your husband?"

“No,” said Anna, kindly but firmly, “think not of it, Harry ; it cannot be.”

Harry stared blankly at Anna, who taking his hand said, tenderly and sorrowfully, “Good night, dear brother,” and left him.

No ! Terrible word, blasting as a lightning shock. Little word, yet so great ; said with a breath, yet vibrating through a life-time. *No !* To Harry Thornhill it seemed to obliterate the sun, and bring night to all the world. The hot Capulet, had he been chidden from the Montague’s balcony by Juliet herself, could scarcely have received a deeper stab than that little word “No” sent through Harry’s heart of hearts. It is true that from the outset he feared the failure of his hopes ; but it was the pleasing doubt which all lovers feel, lessening not one jot the pang of losing her to win whose love was the chiefest aim in life, to be worthy of it the highest aspiration.

Whilst Harry Thornhill stood gazing

out into the autumn evening, now rapidly darkening, Anna Lee suddenly returned.

“Harry, Mr Thornhill,” she said, “you have made me so unhappy.”

“I am deeply sorry to hear you say so,” Harry replied.

“I feel that I am so much to blame, that I ought to have acted differently, that—that—”

“Do not reproach yourself, Miss Lee ; it is I who have been in the wrong ; it is I who should have known my own unworthiness,” said Harry ; “and yet even now I could fain believe that such love as mine would be even worthy of Anna Lee.”

“You do well to rebuke me, Mr Thornhill—brother, if you will let me say so ; for what a heart must mine be that is not awakened into love by your noble, pure, and generous nature ! but we do not govern ourselves in these things, Harry. Can you forgive me ?”

“Ay, with all my heart, Anna. But let me ask one favour ?”

“Name it.”

“Will you consent to think again, to ponder well our conversation of this evening, and, at least for a little time, to withdraw the answer you have given me?”

This was the very question which Anna wished to be asked; for she feared the sudden breaking of her refusal of Harry to her uncle; and she wished for time to prepare Mr Mountford, for what she now felt was, to him, bad news. So she consented to Harry's proposition, and at the same time requested him not to acquaint Mr Mountford with the nature of the first part of their conversation.

Then once more a gleam of hope stole into Harry's soul, and as he parted from Anna a star seemed to rise out of the sea for a good omen. It was the light of a distant vessel evidently making for Helsingwick Bay, and Harry sat watching it until night made a dark background for the light to shine upon.

By and by, the wind rose and the sea

became boisterous, and, at times, seemed to put out the star; but it shone on, nevertheless, and Harry went to bed and dreamed that its continuous glimmer, in calm and storm, was Hope's cheering promise of the eventual return of his love for Anna Lee.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE STAR WENT OUT.

WHILST Harry Thornhill was dreaming, the wind rose higher and higher. The storm-tossed vessel's light appeared less frequently, and then went out altogether.

As morning dawned Denby Rise awoke with an uncomfortable sensation. The best bed-rooms, as well as the servants' apartments, felt that the wind was very furious about the chimneys, and that the sea was in a terrible rage with the rocks down the glen.

Joe Wittle could not rest in his bed; fearful pictures of the cavern presented themselves to the mind of Mrs Grey; Anna Lee wondered where Paul Massey's yacht was, in such a storm; and Harry

Thornhill thought he would get up and see what had become of the star that had shone so cheerily in his dreams.

Morning was dawning, grey and angrily, with streaks of clouds in the east, like dragons with bristling manes and demons with fiery tails. A vessel was swaying to and fro on the sandbank in Helswick Bay, making signals of distress.

Harry alarmed the household with the intelligence, and he and Joe Wittle bestrode horses and rode off to the little watering-place, where they found people astir and gazing at the imperilled ship. A boat had tried to put off to her assistance, but in such a sea no boat could live for five minutes.

The waters were white with foam, and every moment threatened utter destruction to the stranded vessel. The crew were seen hurrying about in dismay and dread, easing the ship of everything moveable. Sea-chests, chairs, tables, barrels, mirrors, sofas, benches, hammocks,

were pitched overboard in strange confusion. The vessel appeared to be so near the shore that Harry wondered the crew did not jump overboard and swim for their lives; but a moment's consideration convinced him that such a venture must lead to certain death.

At length a boat was lowered, and a venturesome fellow in it with a rope to carry to land. A thrill of joy went through the little group on shore, when the tiny thing made headway, for a few moments, against the heaving waters; but soon an exclamation of horror told the fate of man and boat: one towering wave carried them away, and they were seen no more.

The vessel rolled fearfully. Her timbers creaked, and groaned, and cracked. Oh, for a life-boat at this critical juncture! But unhappily this wreck—no imaginary one, we can assure our readers—occurred in the early days of the National Institution which has done so much since in the cause

of humanity, and about which we should all have a thought, and for which we should always have a guinea when, in summer, we wander about dangerous coasts that autumn strews with shipwreck.

Had there been a life-boat at Helswick at the period of which we write, several lives might have been saved, as lives have since been saved by the boat and its gallant crew now stationed conveniently near that dangerous bay.

A terrible lurch of the vessel was fatal to another seaman, and death seemed imminent to the remainder; and yet the Helswick people could render no assistance. They crowded on the beach, pale and wan and scarcely able to stand against the wind, which blew a hurricane.

Harry Thornhill, and one of the little town's officials, had gone off in the hope of procuring a Manby's mortar and tackle, which somebody said was lying, in a defective state, in the cellar of the Town Hall.

Meanwhile the survivors, on board the creaking ship, sought refuge in the rigging. Their only hope seemed to be in assistance from the shore; and the only hope ashore was that the tide might ebb and leave the sandbank comparatively dry.

As the storm increased in fury, the chances of escape for the four poor fellows, huddled together in the rigging, seemed to decrease momentarily. It was noticed that one of the men (the captain it was thought) was bleeding. Suddenly there was a loud crash; the main-mast had fallen; and now it was felt that all was over. People held their breath, and looked horror-stricken at each other.

A couple of fops who had stared at the sea through eye-glasses, on the previous day, and lisped pretty things, on the beach, to pretty girls, in pretty hats, came gaping to the scene, limp, collarless, and unshaven, as though they had been forcibly driven into the storm; several women, huddled up in cloaks, ran to

and fro, sobbing and wailing ; a few old sailors, who had several times attempted to put to sea against the most desperate odds, shuffled about with downcast looks ; and the wind blew upon the group, until, at a short distance, men and women looked like a heap of shreds and patches, out of which peered blanched and fearful faces.

The four men were still safe ; a moment before the mast fell they had slipped away down separate ropes and reached the deck. The mast went over, and the vessel began to break up ; but the four men continued to battle successfully with the storm. The forepart of the vessel still hung together, and the survivors clung to the bowsprit. It was not until this critical juncture that Captain Manby's mortar was brought to the scene of action, and it was with difficulty that it was worked by Harry Thornhill and an old coast-guardsmen. The men on the wreck were evidently at their last gasp ; every other

wave washed over them. At length the mortar was discharged, and a rope went flying into the sea, but fell short of the wreck. A second and a third shot proved equally futile; and the spectators groaned at the sight of only three poor wretches clinging to the frail thing which jutted up, black and puny, in the foaming waters.

A faint cheer announced the success of the fourth report, and eyes began to light up with a gleam of hope when one of the three, fastening the rope about him, plunged into the sea, and in another minute was being rapidly drawn towards the shore. The next minute it was evident that something had gone wrong. His progress shoreward stopped: he was suspended between the vessel and the rocks. The other end of the rope had become entangled in the wreck. It was a terrible moment and a short one. The rope broke nearest the shore; the poor fellow threw up his arms as if in suppli-

cation to heaven, rolled back into the sea, and all was over. In this brave and helpless one, a young wife and two children had lost their bread-winner and protector, and yet they lay sleeping in their cottage on Tynebank, unconscious of danger, whilst the dead man was tossing about amongst the seaweed.

Two yet remained: the wounded man, and another. Again the mortar sent its missive whirling through the storm; the rope fell nearest the one whom the people called Captain, but his companion seized it, and was rapidly drawn through the boiling waters, and up the rocks. A cheer for his escape died away on the lips of the spectators in deference to the peril of the one left weak and bleeding behind. Happily the next rope fell near him, and he had strength to fasten the loop about his waist; but it seemed as though this were his last act, and that the hauling in of the rope was but the rescuing of a dead

man from one grave to deposit him in another.

Harry Thornhill had had a quick eye for the danger of the captain; and before any one except Joe Wittle and the coast-guardsmen, who had assisted to lash him to a rope fastened to a ring in the rocks (which had been let in there by nest-finders), knew of his desperate intention, Harry Thornhill was swinging down the rocks. By a reckless effort of courage, he met the half-drowned man at the foot of the cliffs, and fastening his right arm about the drooping form, the two were drawn up together, amidst a cheer that was heard even loudly above the noise, and din, and hissing, and howling of the tempest.

Just then Squire Mountford and his ward came hurrying to the scene; and soon afterwards, at Harry Thornhill's request, and with the consent of the leading medical man in Helswick, the two survivors

were conveyed, in Mr Mountford's carriage, to Denby Rise; whilst the remainder of the wreck broke up, creaking and groaning, and throwing up gaunt arms of timber, like a living thing, struggling in the last pains of dissolution.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SURVIVORS.

THE yacht, we might almost say the brig, which was lost, as described in the previous chapter, was *The Fairy*; the survivors were Paul Massey and an old friend, Winford Barns, a gentleman some years older than Mr Massey, and famous in the North for being clever at anything. He was a powerfully-built man, with a profusion of dark brown hair, and a head well set upon his shoulders. He had a slight limp in his gait, occasioned by an ugly fall in a wrestling match with his groom, when he kept his pack of hounds at Nettlebury Hall on the Wear. Strange stories were told about his early life in the North; how he could drink more brandy than the

staunchest toper on Wearside; how he could fell a bullock with his fist; how his father died after a drinking match, in which the son put a dozen topers under the table; and how he was cleverer at law than all the big wigs who travelled the Northern circuit. The people believed any desperate thing told of young Squire Barns.

It was said that upon one occasion when hunting he fell from his horse, and was found lying beside the animal near a ditch.

“Good heavens, master,” said the countryman who found him in this plight, “why, your legs must be broken.”

“I believe they are,” said Winford.

“Wait till I fetch a surgeon,” said the man.

“No, no,” said Winford, “just lift me up, and put me astride the horse.”

The countryman did so, and, despite his broken legs, away the young squire rode to be in at the death.

Nothing, it was believed, could kill Mr Barns, and nobody could "get the better of him," and nobody could lie so much like truth; but as he grew older Winford became quieter, and it was at this steadier stage of his career that he made the acquaintance of Paul Massey, whose adventures in *The Fairy* he had since shared.

Rumour, on Wearside, said that Mr Barns had "got through his money," and that it was convenient for him to travel; but any one who had heard Winford boast of his estates and his "pile in the funds," would have set such rumours down to the ever open account of envy, hatred, and malice.

Paul Massey was a contrast to his friend. More graceful of figure, more gentlemanly in appearance. A lithe, tall young fellow of about thirty, Paul was every inch the Paul for a romance. He was masculinely handsome, had dark, bronzed features, black, crisp, curly hair,

and expressive brown eyes, and there was that dash of mystery about his life and habits which could not fail to make him attractive to women. His manners were much more gentle than those of his companion; but there was that in his flashing eye, and in his full but compressed lips, which told of temper that, roused into fury, could rage and storm and do desperate things. But his disposition was evidently generous, manly, and brave, or he could never have made such a lasting impression on Harry Thornhill's pure and noble heart.

It was several days after the wreck. Harry Thornhill had gone to business in Beckford Square; and Paul Massey was sufficiently recovered to be enabled to sit up in an arm-chair, in which Anna Lee had placed a cushion worked with her own fairy fingers. His wounds were not dangerous, and in a fortnight, at the furthest, the doctors said he would be able to travel.

Winford Barns, who had turned out the very morning after the wreck, in good health and spirits, sat smoking by the side of Paul and joking him about Anna Lee.

“I tell you, Paul, I saw her face flush when you spoke to her. I’ve seen enough women in my time to be a judge in these affairs.”

“Nonsense; no girl like her could bestow a thought of love on a harum-skarum devil such as I am,” said Paul.

“Bah! I made some inquiries yesterday, and find she has a heap of money in her own right, and will come in for all old Mountford’s tin; and he’s as rich as a Jew.”

Paul made no reply, but “Pshaw! what care I for money.”

“No, but I’ll tell you what—I do, and as we’ve nothing else on hand you might just as well make love, and marry an heiress for the benefit of us both.”

“You’re an infernally ungrateful fellow,

Winford, to talk so diabolically of people who have treated us so princely ; and to tell you the truth I have already too much respect for Miss Lee, though I have only seen her three times, to hear her spoken of lightly."

"By the Lord ! I speak lightly of no woman when I think of her as a fair and honourable match for Paul Massey, Esquire, of Brignall Court," said Winford, assuming a frankness which did not well become him ; "and I believe, if the truth were known, there is a sneaking kindness in your own romantic heart for Miss Lee."

Paul laughed, and Mrs Grey entered to dress his right arm, which, hanging in a sling, even added to the picturesqueness of Paul's attire, and made him, as Mr Mountford had remarked to Anna Lee, look quite Corsairish.

Winford Barns stroked his cleanly shaven chin, and twinkled his little eyes at his own thoughts, as he smoked his

strong cavendish, lounging back in his chair.

"It's a snug crib this, Paul; you might do worse than spend a month every year, in sight of such a bit of coast as twists itself round those infernal rocks yonder; and if everything else failed, a fellow might turn wrecker here, and become rich, as lord of the manor," said Winford, when Mrs Grey had left the room.

"You have queer thoughts aboard this morning, Winford. Government hasn't collapsed and repudiated its debts—eh? old boy."

"No; but hang it, Paul, I'd a pile of stuff in my chest that went overboard off Helswick."

"I never heard of it before," said Paul, smiling incredulously.

"Fact, by Jove; but never mind, we're in a snug port now."

"I'm glad you like it, said Mr Mountford, who had knocked twice without

being heard, before he entered; "and I hope you will not fail to use it thoroughly."

"Good morning," said both gentlemen together, and Winford Barns rose and shook Mr Mountford so heartily by the hand that Paul was astonished at such a display of friendship.

"I trust you are still better, Mr Massey," said Mr Mountford, addressing his invalided guest, "and that we may all dine together to-day."

"Sir, I shall be delighted," said Paul, a momentary thought of sitting near Anna Lee crossing his mind as he said so.

When dinner was announced, and Anna Lee was not one of the company, Paul could not help feeling disappointed. Complaining of pain, he left the table early, and retired to the rooms set apart for himself and his friend in another wing of the building. Crossing one of the corridors, he met Miss Lee, and stopped

her to say that he hoped indisposition had not compelled her absence from the dining-room.

"Oh, no," said Anna, conquering a little confusion, "I shall come in with the coffee, Mr Massey. Are you better?"

"Not so well this evening," said Paul languidly, "and very much disappointed at your absence from table, Miss Lee."

Anna could not help blushing, and she almost hated herself at that moment for her weakness. Paul could see her confusion, and with true gentlemanly feeling passed on, merely expressing a hope that he should have the pleasure of seeing Miss Lee again before dark.

It was twilight then, and the autumn wind was moaning plaintively without. Anna went to her room and wept bitterly, she knew not why: it seemed as if dark clouds were gathering about her, as though some dread mishap awaited her. Perhaps it was the spirit of the dying year that had its influence upon her;

for she had seen the dead leaves chasing each other down the glen all the afternoon, and had heard the plaintive cries of sea-birds, and the sighing and sobbing of the wind that wandered about the house with a strange hollow sound.

The last rose in her flower-stand outside the window, had shed its last leaves that day, and the swallows had congregated together, and departed for other lands. She could see their forsaken homes, under the eaves, from her window, and she thought of her own home, and wondered if ever she would have to leave it behind her, a solitary place amongst the trees; and then she knelt down and prayed God to have her in his keeping, and poured out all the gratitude of her heart for His great goodness to her.

“Make me more worthy, O Lord, of Thy many mercies, more worthy of the guardian Thou hast given me in this world; and, oh, gracious Father! give comfort to the heart I have wronged.”

Much more did Anna Lee say in her prayer. She felt comforted afterwards, but even prayer did not altogether disperse the cloud that seemed to hang about her heart.

It was by her uncle's request that she had not presented herself at dinner; but he was pleased to see her when tea was announced, and he sat down beside her and kissed her fair forehead; but the tears almost started into her eyes at his greeting. She was glad after tea to respond to her uncle's request for a little music; it was a relief to her almost morbid fancy. To get within the shade of the lamp seemed to her an escape from herself; and never was heard such plaintive, ravishing, wild music as that which Anna conjured from her favourite instrument that evening. It might have been said of her as it has been said of a great composer: that her thoughts and feelings and impressions had taken with them a melodic form. The moaning of the

autumn wind, the falling of the leaves, tender thoughts of home, fear and dread, and love and devotion, all were described in those sweeping, trickling, modulated chords, and cadenzas, and monotones that came from Anna's harp.

On Mendelssohn's return from Scotland, his sisters, it is said, were very desirous that he should tell them all about the Hebrides. "That cannot be told," was his reply, "it can only be played." Anna Lee had caught a gleam of this sort of musical narratory power, though she exercised it unconsciously. And Paul Massey thought he could interpret some of the harp's sweet language; but sympathetically as his heart throbbed to the melodious harmonies, he could not unravel the tangled tale which Anna's heart was repeating through her fingers.

Winford Barns did not trouble himself about the music, but went off to sleep; whilst Mr Mountford was spirited away into thoughts of the past which, as

usual, led up to speculations on the future of his charming ward. If he could have raised the mysterious veil which shuts out, in mercy, the things that are to be, what a vista of blasted hopes would have opened up to bid him close his eyes, and pray that the curtain might fall for ever !

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RUNAWAY.

If you had seen Joe Wittle sitting on a reversed stable bucket, and looking up into the hay-rack, from which Harkaway was ever and anon cropping a savoury mouthful, you might have credited him with some momentous calculation with regard to the quantity and quality of the said hay, some abstruse philosophizing with regard to its component parts, or some mental speculations as to the number of mouthfuls which Harkaway would make of it. And had you seen how uneasily he shifted his short thin legs about, and how, ever and anon, he took his thumbs from his vest arm-holes to put his hands into his big waistcoat pockets,

and *vice versâ*, you might easily have guessed that his investigations were, by no means, satisfactory.

The time was evening—the evening which closes our previous chapter—and Joe was sitting in the uncertain light of a candle. His thoughts were puzzling and disagreeable, it is true; and they neither referred to hay-rack nor Harkaway.

“I’m blowed if it ain’t a rum go, and that’s the long and the short of it,” he said, after a good many uneasy movements, “and I only wish Joseph Wittle, sir, you had a blessed wife of your boosum to confide in.”

Harkaway set back her ears and stamped her right fore leg, as though she regarded this confession of Joe’s as a breach of the confidence which had heretofore subsisted between her and Mr Mountford’s chief groom.

“Ah! my lassie,” said Joe, rising, and affectionately patting the favourite mare’s sleek graceful neck:

“I knows yer intelligence and sagacity more than anybody, and hacknowledges it, my beauty; but it ain’t a case in which you can be of any service.”

Harkaway rubbed her nose against Joe’s fur helmet, and Joe duly acknowledged the salute, returning, however, to the stable bucket, and examining the manger as before.

“The boy’s run away from school these three days, and taken up his quarters with Mat Dunkum; and she means to go and fetch him away, and to have my assistance in the adventure, this werry night. Joseph, Joseph, mind wot yer arter! Don’t let that ere soft heart of yourn go gettin’ you into a scrape. Why don’t she tell the guvner? why should there be all this ere mystery agoin’ on?”

No answer came from the hay-rick nor from the rafters above; and Joe, giving himself a shake, as if he were waking from a dull sleep, appeared determined to put no more interrogations in the same quarter.

“No matter, Joseph, you’ve made a promise, that promise is to a petticoat, and you must keep it: I’m telling yer.”

Having made which declaration, he pulled his helmet further over his eyes, buttoned a short monkey-jacket over his long big-pocketed vest, carefully examined the proportions of a short crab stick, which he thrust under his arm, whistled, very *pianissimo*, two bars of “Rule Britannia,” cast a parting glance at Harkaway, extinguished the light, and left the stable.

Half an hour afterwards, having taken a roundabout cut from the yard of Denby Rise, in order that the sound of wheels might not be heard in the house, Joe led out a gray cob, harnessed to a light cart, and conducted it to a bend in the high road. Here he found Mrs Grey awaiting him. Without exchanging a single word he assisted her into the trap, and then drove off.

The autumn wind howled after them

as they dashed along the road. It blew gustily over the stubble fields, and through the red-berried hedges; it drove the clouds over the moon in successive detachments, like moving battalions; it rustled through the ivy that hung about the old towers and ruined halls by the road-side; and its moaning, and its defiant blasts, seemed to find an echo in the heart of Joe Wittle's companion; for Mrs Grey loved her youngest born with a love that only a mother can understand; a love which would have given her courage enough to brave ten thousand Mat Dunkums. But it was not the true maternal love, as will be seen in the end, not the pure deep-rooted love which blends with high maternal duty. It was the love which would sacrifice everything to its idol, which would bare its own heart to the knife, if the idol would thereby be benefited; which would suffer inwardly, and be racked with torments, rather than give the idol one touch of

pain; but which had not sufficient strength and nobleness to burn out the festering spots that disfigured the idol and threatened its future happiness. Had Richard Grey committed a great wrong, Mrs Grey could not have borne the idea of his bearing the pain of punishment; indeed, she would have failed to discover wrong in anything he did. Even now, that Richard had run away from school, to prowl about with Mat Dunkum, she did not, for one moment, blame the boy; all her thoughts of wrong in the affair centred in Richard's arch-tempter, Mat Dunkum.

Turning a sharp bend in the road, leading to a narrow by-way, which had its termination near Mat's cottage, the horse ran upon a figure that was hurrying in the opposite direction.

There was a little scream, and the moon showed to Joe Wittle a girl, muffled up in a dark shawl. The groom leaped down, and had the little maid in his arms

in a moment. Mrs Grey instantly recognized Bessie Martin.

“Dear, dear!—why the child has fainted,” said Mrs Grey, taking her from Joe, and laying her against the opposite bank.

“I don’t think she’s much hurt,” said Mr Mountford’s groom; “it was only jest a touch and go.”

Bessie’s sweet face, in its setting of ebony curls, looked singularly beautiful in the fitful moonlight. An application of Mrs Grey’s smelling salts soon brought life into the closed eyes, which opened with a wild, bewildered gaze.

“Richard! Richard!” was her first exclamation.

“Dear child,” said Mrs Grey, pushing the black curls back from the darkly pale forehead.

“Your mother knows you have run away, do come back, *dear* Richard,” and, sobbing convulsively, Bessy seemed to regain her senses.

"Is she hurt, Mrs Grey?" said Joe, "ask her that."

"How selfish, to be sure!" said Mrs Grey to herself, having been thinking all the time only about the object of her journey; "are you hurt, love?"

"No, no," said Bessie, shaking the dust from her frock.

"Are you sure, love? stand up; there, dear, do you feel any pain?"

"No," said Bessie," staring at Joe and the conveyance.

"Yes," said Mrs Grey, answering the inquiring glance—"yes, we have come to fetch him."

"Oh, I am so glad, so glad," said the child, with touching fervency; "Grandma is so ill. Will you bring him back to Grandma's."

"Dear, dear Bessie!" exclaimed Mrs Grey, folding her to her breast, and sobbing over her.

"Come now, Mrs Grey, if the child ain't hurt we'll go on, and we can take her with us."

Bessie made some objection to this proposition, but it was overruled, and they lifted her into the spring-cart. She told them how she came to be so far from home at that late hour of the evening. She had put Grandma to bed, and everything was so quiet and still, and something told her that she ought to go and induce Richard to return. She thought he might come with her, and it was lonely without him, and Grandma was ill with thinking about him, and she knew how hurt his mother would be. So when Grandma was fast asleep, she had put a shawl over her head, crept out at the back door, and set out to Mat Dunkum's cottage. She knew where it was, because Richard had told her about it. She had run nearly all the way there, and had been to the cottage, but there was nobody in; and after calling Richard by name, until she was frightened at the echoes, she had started back again, and was hurrying home when they met her at the turning.

By the time that Bessie had finished her story they were in sight of Mat's cottage ; and it gave Joe Wittle a throb of satisfaction to see a light gleam from the two usually dark and gloomy windows.

So seldom was Mat to be found there, that Joe had scarcely dared to hope they would meet with him anywhere but in the caverns ; and he had pictured to himself the perils of rowing Mrs Grey along the two or three hundred yards of coast, which he had arranged to navigate in a boat, provided beforehand by a Denby fisherman. The memory of his former exploit in that locality had returned upon him so forcibly that, until he saw the cottage-light, Joe was in such a state of perturbation, that for two pins, as he confessed afterwards to Harkaway, he would have shown the blessed ocean a clean pair of heels.

Mat's quick ear detected the sound of wheels, and when Joe pulled up within a few yards of the cottage, amongst heaps of

dangerous pieces of rock, Mat came forth with a lantern.

“Hollo! what’s up now?” he said, holding the light so that it cast an uncertain gleam upon the visitors.

Richard Grey followed Mat, and cocked his unloaded pistol.

“What’s up, I say?” repeated Mat.

“Yes! What’s up?” said Richard.

Joe Wittle, not quite understanding what he ought to do under the circumstances, but willing to be of service to Mrs Grey, secretly clutched his crab-stick, and informed Mat that Mrs Grey wanted her son.

“Oh, oh,” said Mat, “and she’s come in her own carriage to fetch him, has she? Oh, oh, we didn’t always ride in our carriage, Mrs Grey.”

“Richard! Richard!” said Mrs Grey, deigning no reply to Mat Dunkum, “come to me.”

“What for?” said Richard, pushing his pistol into his belt, and trying in vain

to catch a glimpse of Mat Dunkum's face.

"Come with me, Richard, dear Richard."

"I shan't," replied Master Grey; upon which Mat shrugged his shoulders and guffawed his satisfaction.

"Perhaps you'd like to walk in, Mrs Grey," said Mat, after a pause, "and hear what Dick has got to say. You'll find him no chicken-hearted fool, I can tell you; he's no Miss Nancy, nor ain't agoin' to be. Come along, Dick, come along, lieutenant, and we'll entertain the visitors on board. Ah! ah!" and Mat, taking Richard by the arm, led him back towards the cottage.

In another moment Mrs Grey laid her hand upon the shoulder of her son; but Mat's pupil resisted both entreaties and commands.

"What's the good of being a fool, mother," said Dick, "I've my living to get some day, and I'm going to get it."

"You shall have everything you want, Richard—don't listen to this bad man—do

come with your mother who loves you so dearly," said Mrs Grey, in a passion of tears.

"Bad man! Come, I like that. Your husband's only pal. Why, Dick, lad, I knew your father afore your mother did, and we was companions, and he'd sooner trust you with me than with her any day."

"I shan't come, mother," said Dick, sulkily, "so it's no good rowing about it."

"Will you come for poor Bessie?" said a sweet little voice which had hitherto been silent.

"Hollo! is that you, Bess?" exclaimed Dick, releasing himself from both Mat and his mother, and helping the girl to alight.

"Yes it's me," said Bessie, "and I've been nearly as far as this looking for you myself."

"What, without anybody along with you?" said Dick in a very different tone to that in which he had addressed his mother.

"Ah! ah," half growled, half laughed

Mat, "she wants you to go home to Grandmother, I should think. A pretty rover you'll make, if grandmothers and such like break up your prenticeship."

Dick said nothing in reply, but Bessie's arm glided gently through his, and her voice repeated: "Do come, Dick, come with me, come with poor little Bessie."

Mat laughed again a mocking laugh, but he began to be afraid of Bessie's influence.

"No, Bess, I can't come, you see; I'm all right here; Captain Dunkum was father's mate, and mother's not acted right, you know."

"Oh, Richard, don't say that; it is wrong, very wrong; but come with us to-night," said Bessie, drawing the boy gently towards the carriage.

"Here, come, drop this dam nonsense," exclaimed Mat, rushing to Dick and seizing him by the arm, "Dick Grey's not coming."

"Mat Dunkum! Have some pity, have

some mercy!" exclaimed Mrs Grey, again taking her son by the arm; "why will you persecute me? give me my son!"

"Oh, I've touched you then, have I?" and he chuckled over his triumph. "But I've not done with you yet, Sarah. Not yet, Mrs Grey."

Richard Grey noticed this brow-beating of his mother, and something like a gleam of filial duty touched him. "Come drop that," he said to Mat, "I'm not agoin' to have that; I'm no spoony, but she's my mother, Mat."

"Dear Richard!" exclaimed Mrs Grey, throwing her arms round his neck.

"Dear stuff! get off," said the boy, pushing his mother aside.

"Dick," said a sweet wee voice again,—"Dick, come home, come with me."

Mat stood puzzled and silent; Dick was evidently wavering.

"I ain't agoin' to stand here all night," said Joe Wittle, from the carriage.

"If you open your mouth again I'll

shut it for you, you infernal spy," said Mat, turning angrily upon Joe.

Joe clutched his club nervously, but thinking that discretion was the better part of valour, he remained silent.

"Look here, Captain," said Dick at length, "I'll go with them to-night—just for to-night, you know—and I'll be back in the morning."

"Dam nonsense, Dick," said Mat, in a conciliatory but dissatisfied tone; "don't be tied to your mother's apron strings; you'll be a fool all your life if you do."

"Dear Richard!" whispered Bessie, still drawing him towards the carriage.

"But you know—" began the boy with his foot partly upon the step of the conveyance.

"Well, if it's only for to-night," said Mat, thinking it discreet to appear conciliatory and not over-anxious, "of course do as you like. You know your own mind best, and you know your promises, and all that. Well, good night, lieutenant."

“Good night, Captain,” said Dick, cheerily, “to-morrow, you know, I’ll be with you early.”

“All right, lad; be a man, and stick to your word.”

“I will,” said Dick.

“Good night, Mistress Grey,” said Mat, as Mr Mountford’s housekeeper proceeded to get into the conveyance, “allow me to assist you;” and Mrs Grey shuddered to feel his hand upon her arm, and her fear was increased when he thrust his face near hers, and said, “I’ll be even with you, Sarah.”

Joe Wittle speedily turned his horse round, and when he felt himself at a tolerably safe distance from Mat, who stood watching, lantern in hand, Joe asked Mat for a lock of his hair—a piece of bravado for which the whole party had nearly paid very dearly; for Mat made a dash towards Joe, which resulted in such a tug at the reins that the horse started off at a gallop

and narrowly escaped coming to grief over a stone heap.

A hasty bitter oath would have followed them; but the wind carried Mat Dunkum's withering words amongst the thorns, and brambles, and broken rocks, which surrounded the land-shark's dwelling.

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE'S METAMORPHOSES.

WE claim, in this place, the privilege of the dramatist, to let the curtain fall, for a short time, upon the actors in our story: not that we require the time for a mere change of dresses and a shifting of scenes; not that our actors want rest or refreshment; but that we may not weary the reader with details which are not necessary in the development of this history.

So imagine, dear madam, and you, kind sir, that the prompter's whistle has brought down the drop-scene upon the first part of our story, and that many months have passed away since Bessie Martin induced Richard Grey to leave his bad tutor, Mat Dunkum; since Anna Lee

began to feel that change in her thoughts and feelings which commenced with her introduction to Paul Massey. Imagine the winter winds that have swept over Denby Rise, and the snows that have whitened the rocks; imagine the gradual progress to convalescence of Paul Massey, and the cold journeys of Harry Thornhill from Maryport to the scene of his unfulfilled hopes; imagine the bitters and the sweets which have mingled in the cup of Anna Lee; and the secret sorrows of Mrs Grey. Take our previous chapters as a basis for your thoughts, and, after a brief exercise of your fancy, contemplate the new set of scenes upon which we now beg to raise the curtain.

Those of our fair readers who have experienced that great change induced by the first consciousness of being deeply in love—fondly, passionately in love—need no description of the sensations of Anna Lee. Those who have not felt these first

tender humanizing influences we must leave to imagine them.

Anna Lee, who tried to analyze her new feelings, could only liken them to those of Undine when the fairy felt that she had obtained an immortal soul. She confessed herself to herself, and trembled, with a strange sensation of hope and fear and doubt, when she really knew that the love, which all Harry Thornhill's solicitude and attention had failed to excite, had been called forth by a stranger. It subdued and made her thoughtful: it induced a more regular and careful attention to home duties: it toned down and beautified her love for Uncle Mountford: it tinged her conduct towards Harry Thornhill, with a sisterly affection: it made her both happy and miserable: it sent her to her room, hundreds of times, to contemplate her secret, to revel over it, to nurse it, and to wonder at it.

Paul Massey, too, had felt a singular change come over his dreaming. Hand-

some, dashing, chivalrous, he had long been accustomed to the admiration of the opposite sex ; but, until now, he had never felt a real respect for any woman ; until now he had never felt desirous to win a woman's true esteem ; until now he had felt himself worthy of the admiration he had universally obtained ; until now he had never wished to be respected for high qualities of mind, for noble thoughts, for intellectual attainments.

The change, thus wrought by the great enchanter, speedily won, not only upon Anna Lee, but upon her uncle ; whilst it afforded Barns considerable amusement and satisfaction.

Paul had suddenly discovered a new attraction in the stories of his early youth, and would find his way into Mr Mountford's library, at all hours, to discuss all sorts of delightful questions in literature and art. He unearthed Plutarch, and had friendly battles with the Squire, in comparisons of Alcibiades and Coriolanus, Aristides and

Cato, Cimon and Lucullus. He astonished and delighted the old scholar with snatches from the classic poets, with reminiscences of school-life, with incidents of travel, and found access to the old man's heart in a thousand other ways.

One morning, when talking of Fenelon, he awakened suspicions which sent Mr Mountford on a long thinking troubled gallop with Harkaway, and gave him a sleepless night.

"I think," said Paul, "that one of the most beautiful passages in Fenelon is his description of Antiope; where he speaks, you know, of the glowing modesty of her countenance; of her contempt of great finery in dress; of her total forgetfulness of her own charms. When Idomeneus, you know, leads the dance with the beauties of Crete, she might have been taken for Venus; when she goes out with him to hunt, he discovers such dignity of manner that might distinguish Diana: she alone being ignorant of all this superiority.

. I have often thought of Antiope since I have been in your hospitable mansion, Mr Mountford, and traced a likeness to her in your charming niece."

This was enough. Mr Mountford's eyes were opened; and half an hour afterwards he was galloping, with his thoughts, over Helswick heath.

Never since that favourite mare had run away with her jockey and the Leger, had Harkaway been tempted into such a pace; but fast as she went she could not overtake the set of new thoughts which troubled her master, thoughts which were of the sweet and the bitter.

It was hardly wise for a man, the action of whose heart was, according to Dr Fell's opinion, weaker than was desirable, to gallop at such a rate. But Mr Mountford, when roused, was a man of strong feelings, and he seemed to be trying to gallop out of himself, to leave himself behind, to out-strip the hundred fancies that crowded upon him.

When Harry Thornhill left Denby Rise, a week previously, Mr Mountford had reason to believe that Harry's proposition to Anna had not been received according to his hopes. Within the past few days he had noticed a marked change in Anna. He could not mistake the manner of Paul Massey's reference to Antiope. He liked Paul Massey, he loved Harry Thornhill, and the happiness of Anna Lee was the hope of his declining years.

It was a perplexing, unhappy situation for the old man, and it required a struggle to contemplate it calmly and philosophically. But Mark Mountford was a wise man, a scholar, and a gentleman. Some guardians, some uncles, on making such a discovery as that which dawned, with the spring, upon Mr Mountford, would have upbraided their niece, ordered Paul Massey to quit their roof, and sent for a priest to marry his ward to Harry Thornhill on the spot. Mr Mountford had noticed the change in his niece; he had received,

more than once, very pointed hints of the failure of Harry Thornhill's wooing ; and, above all, he had had, upon the very day when we drew up our curtain for the second time, intimation that Harry Thornhill was going abroad for two or three years.

So he sent for Paul Massey into the well-known library, and talked very seriously to that gentleman for a very long time. He told him all about his hopes and wishes ; he told him about the interviews which that room had seen between himself and Harry Thornhill.

Paul Massey confessed his love for Anna Lee, but denied that he had ever so far forgotten what was due to his hospitable host as to tell Miss Lee of his passion. No, nor had he gone so far as to make a planned attack upon her affections. He hoped Mr Mountford would not think him capable of dishonourable conduct. Miss Lee had been exceedingly kind to him, and he had been proud enough to believe that she was not averse to his society. He

could not help his feelings, he could not control his likes and dislikes; he only knew this, that he had never loved until now. But his gratitude to his friend Harry, and he might say his affection for him, would of course, after Mr Mountford's explanation, make him quit the field in his friend's favour. He was aware that his health was now quite restored, and that he might have left Denby Rise some weeks ago: had he known that Harry Thornhill was engaged to Miss Lee he should have done so; but he had seen nothing in the conduct of Harry to make him think that he had hopes of such a character as those described by Mr Mountford. Did he mean to say that Harry did not love his niece? Certainly not; he could not imagine any man not loving her. But he was sorry that Mr Mountford should be angry; and was ready to quit Denby Rise that very day, and to go about the world with the memory of its happy days ever in his mind.

And now it was Anna's turn. Her interview with her uncle was however only a brief one; she was always wont to be frank with her uncle, and she did not on this occasion evade any of his questions.

At the close of their interview she placed in Mr Mountford's hands a letter received that morning from Harry. Even in a story we refrain from printing all the tender things which Harry said in this letter, all the noble words of self-sacrifice which he had penned, with a feverish trembling hand, on those closely written pages, which Anna had almost bathed in her tears. The writer said he had long feared that Anna could never love him sufficiently to warrant the fulfilment of Mr Mountford's wish, and his dear hopes; that indeed she had told him as much, and that he had not been blind to the interest which she had shown in his friend Paul Massey. Perhaps love was naturally jealous; his must be so, for he fancied that Anna loved Paul Massey, and he was sure

that Paul loved her. If this was not the case, patient thought convinced him—convinced him against his will—that Anna had at any rate only to go into the world, to meet with one whom she could love better than himself, and one more worthy of her. The business of the house needed some attention in America and the Canadas, and also in Rotterdam; and the firm having determined to open new agencies in these and other foreign stations, he had solicited and obtained the post of foreign inspector and agent for three years. He hoped that change of scene would soften what he must confess was a severe blow to his hopes—hopes which he knew he had had no right to indulge—and his absence would leave Miss Lee free to choose one who would make her such a husband as she deserved.

Altogether Denby Rise had experienced few such unhappy days as this, on which Harry intimated his intention of quitting

England. Mr Mountford had felt, for the first time, how truly Dr Fell had spoken when he assured Mr Mountford that any great anxiety or excitement would be seriously dangerous to his health. He went to bed that night almost prostrated, and though he acknowledged, to himself, the wrong he had done in attempting to force the affections of two young people, he could not help thinking that the turn which affairs had taken would neither bring happiness nor comfort to Anna.

Paul Massey was in no frame of mind to listen to the chaff of Winford Barns, who had that day returned from a week's visit to Maryport.

Anna Lee spent a sleepless night, though she felt that it was a comfort to have made her uncle acquainted with her secret.

Mrs Grey had somewhat diverted Anna's thoughts from the channel in which they had been running, by an account of the troubles and blessings of having two sons. Indeed it was midnight be-

fore Mrs Grey had finished a true and particular history of the rescue of her son Richard from Mat Dunkum, the devotion to him of little Bessie Martin, and the progress which Frank was making under that dear, kind, generous gentleman, Mr Thornhill, who two months ago, as no doubt Miss Lee was aware, had taken her youngest son into his office.

It was seldom that Mrs Grey was communicative about herself, but this night she was particularly so, chiefly through Miss Lee's encouragement, but also on account of her desire to make an ally of Miss Lee in a scheme of her own.

The boys, she said, lodged together, and she feared they did not agree so well as they might. Richard was naturally of an exciteable nature and proud, and perhaps he did not like to be so much below his brother, though of course he should remember how hard Frank had worked, and how Mr Thornhill always thought so highly of Frank. Then Richard, having been

led away and taught strange habits, by the person who lived at the caverns, had no doubt influenced his character and made him a little wilful; and of course Frank should remember that, and give way to him. Besides he was younger than Francis, and had not had the opportunities of improvement which he had had; Frank had been in Maryport so long, and had had time to resist its temptations and all that, which ought to be considered. She was quite sure that some day Richard would do well, for he was always clever. Miss Lee should hear poor Bessie Martin talk about him. He had written two letters to Bessie, and had promised to marry her. It was quite amusing to hear the boy talk; and as for Bessie, dear little thing, she would certainly grow up into a very pretty woman, she had no doubt, though what was to become of her when her grandmother, the schoolmistress, died she did not know, and the old woman could not live long. Miss

Lee must think it strange of her talking about these matters, which she was kind enough to say interested her, but of course poor people had their own feelings, and she could not help thinking that she ought to go and live in Maryport for the purpose of taking care of her sons. No, that was not exactly what she had wanted to tell Miss Lee; but she thought that some day she might really be obliged to do so, and if Miss Lee could bring it round, when she was talking to Mr Mountford, so that if she should have to leave Denby Rise it would not come upon him sudden-like, she should certainly take it kindly. She had saved a little money, and Richard ought to have a mother's eye upon him; but she would rather lay down her life than Mr Mountford should think her ungrateful. Ah! it was a painful subject that which Miss Lee was kind enough to mention about her husband leaving her; but God knew that she had given him no cause for his desertion; and she believed

that her prayers would be answered, for she never went to sleep without asking that, alive or dead, George Grey should be undeceived if he thought she had. She should have died, with shame and sorrow, had it not been for knowing that there was One above who saw all things and to whom all hearts were open.

Thus, the flood-tide of change set in upon Denby Rise. Like many another household which had slumbered on, in a happy monotony of peace, Denby Rise was about to experience a series of rapid events which would make it Denby Rise no longer; which would wipe out the Denby Rise of joyous springs, and happy summers, and peaceful autumns, and contented winters.

Some one has said there is no deeper law of nature than that of change. For a time the law may seem to be in abeyance, as it had for some years at Denby Rise. Years, happy, peaceful years, had

passed over that gabled house in the valley, leaving little traces of the flight of time. Extra mosses, it is true, had grown about the trees, and the ivy had climbed nearer the window sills. A few additional grey hairs had appeared in Mr Mountford's whiskers, and Anna had approached nearer unto womanhood. But no change had come upon the peace and happiness of Anna's life, though Mr Mountford's anxiety, concerning her future, had increased with every year.

Youth traces nought of change. Anna Lee had seen the swallows come and go, until Paul Massey's appearance, without wondering whether she should some day . journey from the dear nest with which Providence had provided her near the sea. And now the time had come for the moral law of change to be put into full action. Let Anna gather the rose-leaves and cover them up—their undying perfume shall be grateful to her in the days that are coming.

Who hath not his rose-leaves? Have you not gathered them, dear readers, from the garden of memory? And do you not hang over them and feel the fragrance of summer which still lingers in the faded, curled-up blossoms? The perfume which came from them, before the great scene-shifter appeared in your home circle and changed it wholly—do you not inhale it from those gathered leaves? May we venture a hope now, that Anna Lee will carry the fragrant leaves into the future, and that they will be pleasant to her soul, mingling, with their odours, music of happy days, whispers of the sweets which may come again after the bitters.

CHAPTER X.

WINFORD BARNES RAISES A DEMON.

THE first great step of change had been accomplished. Anna Lee was betrothed to Paul Massey. Letters, earnest and fervent, had passed between Anna and Harry, full on one side of promises of sisterly affection, full on the other of generous forgiveness and manly hopes for Anna's future happiness. Mr Mountford had been to Maryport, and had seen Harry, and Paul and Harry had almost sobbed in each other's arms.

Harry felt his position keenly, notwithstanding, and it must be confessed that his pride was wounded as well as his heart. Where is the man, however lowly an opinion he may have of his own merits,

who does not experience some pang of humiliation on being refused by a woman whose love he has striven to win?

“Better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all,”

is a beautiful sentiment, and describes a real charm but a melancholy one; though we may come to bear and delight in the fragrance of gathered rose-leaves, even such as these. Harry Thornhill did feel the blow most acutely; but he could not help confessing that it was not a sudden one; for he had always feared that fate had not destined him for Anna Lee. We know how deeply the failure of his proposition, on a certain memorable Sunday, had affected him, and how eagerly he seized upon the faint gleam of hope which afterwards broke through the clouds. That star rising out of the sea,—how it had deceived him!

Harry had underrated his power to suffer. He was not the man to fall under his misfortune. But he was not the man

to stay in England and let the wound heal up. He might see Anna again, and endure, ay, and be happy in, her society; but the hopes that he had built up were English hopes, were associated with home joys and social pleasures, and he did not choose to remain amongst their ruins.

Perhaps it was unwise for Mr Mountford to press an invitation that Harry should spend his last day in England at Denby Rise. Perhaps it was not well that Anna should have given her consent to this. Perhaps it was Fate which prompted Paul Massey to discover that *The Beacon* steamship would sail from Maryport in the night, and that it would be more comfortable for Harry to be put aboard from Denby Rise. Winford Barns was bringing round Paul's new yacht, and if his old friend Harry had forgiven him so fully as he said he had, and would let him put him on board, he would esteem it an everlasting pleasure to have spent with Harry the last few moments of his stay in

England. Besides, this might tend to soothe the sorrow of Anna Lee, who was sorely hurt that she should be the cause of Harry leaving the country. It would do more, Mr Mountford thought—it would close the gossip's mouth, prevent rumour's tongue from wagging of the reason of Harry's departure from England. Spending the last day at Denby Rise, and going to the steamer, on board Paul's yacht, would close against rumour all reasons for trumpeting forth the true speculation concerning Harry's departure. This was a sop to Harry's pride; and, moreover, he felt that he would like to say good-bye to Anna, that her renewed and personal assurances of sisterly love would be some comfort to him. And who could say that he had been rejected of Anna Lee, if he spent his last day at Denby Rise, if he took leave of her and her betrothed at his old friend's dear old mansion? It should be so; and Paul Massey would meet him there.

“I should say you’re a fool for your pains,” said Winford Barns, when Paul called upon him, at his lodgings in Maryport, after seeing Mr Mountford off for Helswick.

“Why, Winford, why?” Paul inquired, throwing himself upon a couch.

“Why? why? Is it fair, is it reasonable, is it sensible to tempt a woman in this way?”

“Tempt her! What nonsense you talk—what do you mean?”

“I mean,” said Barns, putting his legs upon the mantel-piece and blowing a cloud of tobacco-smoke up the chimney; “I mean that you deserve to lose her for consenting to it. What will be the result? She will sympathize with the fellow. She will think of the happy days they spent together before she knew you. She will think how bravely he risked his life to save yours. She will think how she is driving him away to foreign lands, how he will be languishing for her in exile, and how you

are the cause of all this ; and if she doesn't hate you, in the end, my name's not Winford Barns."

Paul rose from the couch, and walked about uneasily, as his friend drew this most disagreeable picture. He had been accustomed to ask Winford's advice, and had many times, particularly in money matters, found himself in the wrong by not acting upon it.

"You are so cynical, so mistrustful, Winford," he said, after Barns had finished his sketch ; " besides, you have never loved a woman to know how love begets trust and confidence."

"Confidence, be hanged ! I never trust anybody ; I used to do, but it didn't pay. I tell you sympathy begets what you tender-hearted chaps call love, and that if Harry Thornhill's forlorn state, on that last day, doesn't result in Miss Lee's loving him, and hating you, I'm no philosopher ; and you know I pique myself on knowing a thing or two."

Jealousy is so soon aroused and with so little cause, that Paul Massey already felt its insidious approach. He should have shaken off its contaminating touch at once.

“Mind, whatever you say will not influence me, Winford, will make no impression; because a man that has never been in love cannot judge of its pleasures, its duties, and its confidences; but as I have nothing else to do, one might just as well talk about love as anything else. Don’t you really think Anna Lee loves me too much to be influenced by any visit of poor Harry Thornhill’s?”

“No, I do not! She likes you no doubt. She had seen nobody else but that solemn chap, who didn’t know how to woo her. You were a novelty, something new, and you’ve got a way of making women like you.”

“Go on, Winford; say what you like, I shall not be offended.”

“Well, you needn’t; for you know how desirous I am that you should have

her; because I have been unfortunate, am over-drawn at my banker's, and expect you to come down handsomely when you get the new estates and the big balance left by Miss Lee's Indian parent. Ah, ah! you see how devilish selfish I am in the affair; so you may take in good part whatever I say about it—I consider your interest mine, to a great extent. Don't be offended if I treat the subject in a worldly way, because I am a man of the world."

Paul smiled a smile of pity, and Winford, with his legs still on the mantel-shelf, continued:

"A woman is naturally a fickle, inconstant thing, and as a rule soft-hearted. I grant it's something in her favour, that if a fellow's down on his luck, she does the ministering angel business, and all that sort of thing: and that's what I am afraid of in your case. Miss Lee will never stand Harry Thornhill's leave-taking without loving him, as you call it—loving him for what she will call his sufferings: so

have a care; put off this good-bye business—that's my advice."

"It is impossible," said Paul, who, so great was his friend's influence upon him, began to feel that he wished it were not impossible.

"Bah! Impossible. Why, you have only to see your affianced—that's the term, I think? eh?—you have only to see her, or write to her, to prevent the thing. Of course she will be anxious to fulfil your every wish."

"No, no; it would never do. Besides, Harry goes, at her uncle's invitation."

"Why, you are mistrusting your own powers already! Now, mark me, if you let that friend of yours go spooneying about there, with his broken heart and his coming exile, and his years of love, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, the chances are that Miss Lee, who is no doubt a generous, soft-hearted creature, will find that after all there is a corner of her heart unoccupied, and once Harry gets admission

into that corner he'll push you out neck and shoulders."

Paul said a hasty word, indicative of his contempt for Winford's selfish philosophizing; but continued to walk from one end of the room to the other, in an unsettled state of mind. Truth to tell, Barns had dropped a grain of poison into his soul that was already tainting his love for Anna Lee.

We can scarcely say he was jealous; but his love for Anna had made him, as we have already shown, a different man, and he had lost his old confidence in his own powers over woman. What if she should love Harry this little that Barns spoke of? What if this little should fructify under the influence of sympathy and pity? What if his own hold upon Anna's heart only arose out of mere novelty and romance? She had scarcely seen anybody but Harry and himself. For a long time there was some reason to think she loved Harry. Now that he was going away, she

might discover that her sisterly love, which she talked about, might grow into something stronger at the last moment: and then!

The thoughts which followed were torturing, and Paul would have quarrelled with Barns as the cause of his unreasonable discomfort. But Winford knew Paul's passionate nature, and wisely avoided further irritation, conscious, for many reasons, that it would be impolitic to quarrel with Paul Massey.

Meanwhile Harry Thornhill prepared for his exile. The local newspapers announced that the able and highly esteemed junior partner of the eminent firm of Welford and Co. was about to quit England to take the management of their extensive trade in the Colonies and Russia. People in Beckford Square shook hands with him, and said how sorry they were. Sundry old men and women, to whom he had been kind at various times, came and blubbered their woes in the porter's room. Where

would they find the like of Mister Thornhill? A number of merchants, and brokers, and shippers, sent a deputation to the junior partner to invite him to a complimentary dinner, at which it was intended to present him with a token of their regard. Keen-eyed men, and bushy-whiskered men, and stout fellows with big watch-chains, and men of money, and indeed all sorts of men, had called at the office to make inquiries. Was it true that Thornhill was going abroad for two or three years? Yes! Very sorry indeed,—great loss to Beckford Square,—great loss to Maryport,—most rising young man,—pity he was going,—but couldn't be helped,—quite surprised on hearing of it.

And much more was said; but Harry kept out of the way as much as possible, and felt like a mere looker-on, one who is not personally interested. It was observed that the prospect of his departure had changed him greatly. He avoided all conversation about his going, and talked ab-

stractedly upon matters which concerned him but little. Occasionally he put on a light-hearted air, joked and appeared merry, but it was a solemn kind of merriment which was easily seen through, and set down to an effort to cloak the sorrow which he felt at leaving Maryport and his old friends.

The sugar merchant's daughter, whom we have incidentally mentioned in a previous chapter, heard of Harry's departure with a sigh, and thought of the evening when he had danced with her. . . . Happy sugar merchant's daughter, who hath not told her liking, and will speedily be consoled, with [the first beau who offers his hand for thine and the dowry which thy rich father will put into it!

Francis Grey took a walk by the docks (when he heard that Mr Thornhill was to go away so speedily) and looked up amongst the rigging of the vessels, and down again upon the decks, and up again into the rigging, seeing neither the one nor the other.

Once or twice, Harry had rummaged over his papers and books, with the pretence of deciding what he would take with him. There was one little packet over which he had often lingered. This last time he wept over it. Yes, wept over it. There was nobody to see him. A fool was he, sir? a booby? Well, that may be. You are at liberty to enjoy your opinion. Sentimental nonsense, to cry! Very well, have it so. He cried, nevertheless; and the packet only contained a faded ribbon, a glove, a withered rose, two or three little pink notes, and some sea-shells. There was nobody there, we say, when Harry laid these out before him, and sobbed over them, and said: "Dear, dear, dear Anna: good-bye! good-bye, Anna." The rose leaves again *chers amis*,—withered, but fragrant still.

Harry recalled all his happy days by the sea, filling his heart and soul with them, for this last once, ere he should strive to wipe them out for ever.

When the fire began to smoulder on the hearth, and all was silent in the street outside, Harry dropped his little treasures, one by one, amongst the embers—the faded ribbon, the glove, the withered rose, the pink notes, the sea-shells. By and by, the fire burnt up and seized upon them and made them its prey, crackling and hissing with them, until Harry felt as if his heart was burning. When there were only embers in the grate again, he chose to make himself believe that his heart was crushed, that it was utterly gone, and all his love for Anna with it.

Now he could look calmly upon the ring, which he had once exchanged with her in sport, and the book of poems which she had given him because he admired them. These he would return to her: it was only proper, he thought, that he should do so. He could do it with the greatest calmness, and make a little speech to her, upon the occasion, about her future happiness. Oh! yes, he could do it; he

was master of himself now: it was all over. And when he had put the sea between himself and Denby Rise he would be quite content. He would be alone in the wilderness—alone with his memories, and Solitude should be his mistress.

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY THORNHILL'S LAST DAY AT DENBY RISE.

It was a bright spring morning when Harry Thornhill arrived at Helswick, on that last journey to Denby Rise. He had reached the place before he was expected, in order that he might walk to Denby along the sands, for which purpose he left his luggage at the Rock Hotel.

How changed everything appeared to be! The tide was out, and Harry felt as if old associations had gone with it. The rocks were not the rocks he had known. They looked hard and bleak, and frowning. The sands were not so golden as of yore. The mist which hung about the point, where he had rescued Paul Massey, instead of heightening the picturesqueness

of the bent coast, looked like mere vulgar fog. The seaweed which fringed the pools that he passed, had lost its many hues. The spring sunshine, the songs of birds, and the fresh perfumed breeze had lost their charms. They excited no new hopes; they only carried the mind back to days, the sweets of which Time had dipped in gall.

Denby Rise looked gloomy too. The gables made dark shadows, in which the ivy whispered of dead hopes and past joys. The green buds, upon the tall trees, and the snowdrops, which bloomed beneath Anna Lee's window, typified the new life of Paul Massey and his love. For them the spring sunshine must be full of gladdening beams. For them the brook, which made such sad music in Harry's ear, must be joyous indeed. But to-day they would put off their happiness. To-day they would lay by their rosy hopes, and bring forth sad-cheerfulness to comfort Harry Thornhill. To-day no

glimpse of their new-born bliss should, if possible, touch the heart of the solitary one. On the morrow the sea would have carried him far away on its bosom, and then might Anna Lee lay her head upon Paul Massey's shoulder, and confess her love again.

Mr Mountford had seen Harry from the library window, and came forth to meet him, with a smile of welcome. He was truly a noble-looking fellow this Mark Mountford. The sun shone upon his white hair and lit up his handsome features as if it delighted to do him honour. But he looked much older than when Harry had seen him, only a few weeks previously. They went in together, and talked of many things; but they never mentioned the one thing that had stabbed them through and through. It was astonishing how they covered up the great sorrow, how they avoided it. .

By and by the master rung the bell to have Harry's arrival announced, and to

prevent Joe from bringing out the carriage in which Paul Massey and Winford Barns were to have met Harry at Helswick.

Paul came into the library, and shook hands, heartily, with Harry, and said how glad he was that the weather was so fine. Barns had brought round the new yacht, and they had christened it *Harry*, the *Preserver*, in remembrance of Harry's gallantry.

An old proverb flashed through Mr Mountford's brain—"Save a man from drowning, and he marries your mistress." But he dismissed the book-whisper instantly, and said Paul's new vessel was an excellent sailer.

Harry said he hoped she would always have smooth seas and fair weather.

Paul thought he would like to say, "You must think me an ungrateful villain, Harry; try to forgive me, try not to hate me, I could die for you," and some other extravagant things; but he dared not un-

cover what Harry and Mr Mountford had covered up.

When Paul went out, as he said, to see after some little matters connected with the yacht, Barns entered to greet Harry; but there was no cordiality between these two. Harry could not forget that Barns had seized the rope, intended for his wounded friend, during the storm; besides which Barns's manner and conversation did not please him. He could not have told you of any particular thing that Barns had done,—beyond thrusting aside Paul and saving himself,—that displeased him; and he could not have told you any particular words which had been offensive. But he did not like Barns, and Barns had no great liking for Harry, whom he regarded as a bit of a fool and a good deal of a spooney.

When Mr Mountford went out and came back with his niece, Barns took careful note of the meeting of Harry and Anna; and soon afterwards went specially

to Paul, with what he called the danger signal. Anna had been unable to restrain her tears, and Mountford, the old humbug—he was sure Mountford was trying it on—motioned to Barns to leave the room with him. Did he do so? Of course he did. Miss Lee and Harry were together for nearly half an hour. Well? Barns had made some excuse to get rid of Mountford, and had seen the two through the window. Spying, sneaking, peeping! No, he hadn't; and if Paul got into such confounded rages with him he would hook it altogether.

Had Paul possessed as much true nobleness of nature as Harry Thornhill, he would have stopped Barns, at this juncture of his report, with scorn. Paul had flared up, it is true, had called Barns a sneak, and had vowed he would hear no more. But when Barns said, "Very well, very well," and was walking away, Paul begged him to finish what he had to tell.

Well, then, in passing the window,

he saw Anna sitting with her hand in Harry's. Harry was talking very earnestly, begging her, no doubt, to reconsider, telling her it was not too late, and all that sort of thing. Well, he would make no *ex parte* statement. He made an excuse to glide quietly into the room for a book. Anna and Harry were too much occupied to notice him, so he passed behind them into the adjoining room; as he did so Harry put a ring upon Anna's finger, and he could distinctly hear him say "*I knew you would, Anna.*" He believed it was the ring which Harry usually wore; but Paul would see for himself at dinner.

Upon this sandy foundation Paul Massey soon built up the structure which Winford Barns had designed. It grew up so rapidly that its proportions seemed to reach the sky and fill the universe. *I knew you would, Anna.* Would what? Why, love him, at last! Knew she would never consent to his leaving England on her

account. Knew she would think of their early days, of his constant love; knew she would pity him, knew she would heal his broken heart. Barns threw in his poisoned hints, and Paul took them eagerly, and raged and stormed and clenched his fists.

Winford was a calm spectator, and anxious that Paul should not lose Anna Lee.

Paul said Barns, no doubt, was right. Love was blind of course. But no, he could not believe it, he would not, he would see for himself. He would ask Anna; no, that would be unjust. If he thought she did relent, he would—No! let Harry have her; he deserved her, he had saved his life.

Thus were Paul's thoughts tossed like a shuttlecock, with passion and jealousy for the battledores.

It was by no means a happy dinner. Mr Mountford said little, and Anna said less. Barns talked a good deal, and Harry and Paul partook freely of wine.

The ring was upon Anna's finger,—the ring which Harry had been in the habit of wearing. What fools the green-eyed monster makes of its victims! What trifles delude and deceive them. Anna's calmness seemed "confirmation strong" of the truth of Paul's wild imaginings. Her sadness, and her sisterly attentions to Harry, seemed to him the earliest approaches to a confession of altered affection.

Fool! selfish fool! How little he knew Anna Lee's nature. How little he understood woman's love.

Paul's jealousy burnt fiercer because he knew that Harry was his superior, because he knew that Harry deserved to have his love returned: and Barns fed the flames, because he disliked Harry, and feared that what seemed to be right would triumph, and because he could not imagine anybody giving up a woman so tamely as he thought Harry was giving up Anna.

There was something beneath Paul's calmness Barns thought; but Barns, with

all his worldly wisdom, was wrong, and Paul Massey, with all his hot romantic love, was most unjust to his mistress. True, he was in the hands of a cruel monster; for jealousy, saith the preacher, is "cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

Night came at last. Harry had bravely fulfilled his part. He had said to Anna all he had intended to say. In the morning he had made his little speech without breaking down. Anna had received back again the ring, which Harry, months ago, had removed, in sport, from her finger. She had vowed to wear it now for his sake, and to cherish for him a sister's love. Harry knew she would, he said,—he was sure she would; but we must leave something to the imagination of our readers, so we pass over all this rapidly. Fill up the shading of our sketch yourself, dear friends. You may easily imagine

how all the servants came out to wish Mr Thornhill good-bye, and how Anna Lee afterwards sobbed in her uncle's arms, and prayed for Harry's safety.

The stars shone down upon Harry, and Paul, and Barns, as they were whirled along from Denby Rise to the cracking of Joe Wittle's whip. Harry fixed his eye upon one which he thought was the brightest, above Denby Rise, and watched it, with a strange sense of loneliness that needed all his strength to combat and overcome. But other stars came into view as he gazed, thousands, millions of them, until his one bright star was lost amongst the sparkling worlds. He took its disappearance as a token: it was better now that he should forget Anna; it was better that there should be no particular star to point out where Denby Rise peered forth amongst the trees.

The carriage wheels rumbled over the stones, and the lamps made illuminated

ghosts on the highway, through which passed stray wayfarers who said good-night to the driver.

Paul Massey had made up his mind to question Harry, when they were on board the yacht, and to satisfy himself, if possible, without having to probe Anna's heart, for the love which jealousy persuaded him was lurking there for Harry Thornhill.

Arrived at Helswick a boat soon carried them to Paul's yacht, which was lying out peacefully, beneath the stars, at no great distance from the caverns in Denby Cove. About a mile beyond, the steamer would pass down channel at midnight, and would signal and wait for the passenger whom the captain considered it an honour and a pleasure to serve. Extra grog was allowed to the small crew, and Harry preferred that he and his two friends should smoke their cigars on deck, the night being particularly mild.

In a short time, Paul, with a bar-

barous selfishness, turned the conversation into the channel which had been formed by his jealous fears. His blindness made the answers appear unsatisfactory.

When Harry began to divine the object of his friend's interrogations, his heart revolted at Paul's unworthy suspicions. And when Paul asked him what he meant by saying to Anna Lee *I knew you would*, when he placed his ring upon her finger, Harry remembered that some person had passed through the room during his conversation with Anna; and the thought that Paul had either been watching, or had set a spy upon him, raised the sleeping lion within him. He replied to Paul, with scorn, and said he was unworthy of Anna Lee.

Paul, whose hot-headed rashness had been stimulated by wine, added threats to his demands.

Winford Barns said prevarication was a sign of guilt.

Harry's sense of the wrong and in-

justice which had been done to Anna Lee could brook this ingratitude no longer; and he taunted Paul, in terms of withering contempt, with meanness.

Hot words followed each other in rapid succession, half-drowned by the loud choruses which the crew were singing below, over their cups. At length Paul said he would drag the secret from Harry, if it choked him. Suddenly the two sprang upon each other. There was a brief scuffle, and in another instant Harry Thornhill disappeared.

“Ahoy! ahoy! a boat, a boat! Mr Thornhill overboard,” exclaimed Winford Barns.

“To the rescue!” shouted Paul, rising to his feet and rushing to the side, but prevented from leaping after his victim by the strong arm of Winford Barns.

“Loose your hold, or by Heaven you shall repent it,” gasped Paul between his

teeth; but Winford only smiled, and gripped his companion the tighter.

“Quick! quick, lads, lower the boat, ere this passionate fellow drowns himself to save his friend.”

This sudden demand upon their energies seemed to sober the yacht’s crew, and a boat with the four men in it speedily dropped upon the sullen tide.

“Don’t be a fool, Paul, for God’s sake!” said Winford, when the men were shouting and rowing and searching the water.

“Talk not of God—we should speak in hell’s name,” said Paul, glaring over the vessel’s side.

“If you *will* compromise yourself, do,” said Winford with a curse; “if you *will* proclaim yourself a murderer, lose your fair bride, and die on a scaffold, do it and be ——.”

“Forbid it, Heaven!” exclaimed Paul, in agony at the thought of such a doom.

“Forbid it, Paul Massey; forbid it,

Winford Barns," said his companion; "for they only have the power."

"Oh, God! that I had been the weaker. Why did you suffer this? Why, when you saw my hot blood was up—why did you not step between us?"

"They who in quarrels interpose,
Will often wipe a bloody nose,"

said Winford coolly; "mayhap I might have gone overboard."

"Heaven forgive me!" groaned Paul, "they are unsuccessful."

The moon looked out from behind a cloud and made a long track across the water, and in its fitful radiance the boat glided behind the stern of the yacht. It was quite clear that the mission of mercy was a fruitless one.

Paul hailed the boat, with a sinking heart, and received the sad reply that "the poor gentleman must ha' sunk like lead." Paul heard the motion of their oars and the water rippling against the

vessel; he saw the gleam of pale gold disappear from the sea; he saw the moon hide her face; he heard the voices of his crew; he felt the hand of Winford Barns upon his shoulder; but, above all, he thought he heard and saw himself pronounced a murderer. The future seemed blotted out, and so did the past—all time was swallowed up with one fearful event: Paul Massey had killed his friend, his companion.

“Come, come,” whispered Winford, “you are safe; besides, even were it not so, you did not mean to kill him.”

“I did, I did—in that moment I could have killed him twenty times, and you knew it,” said Paul, furiously seizing Winford with a desperate grasp.

“There, there, don’t be a fool—remember I am your friend; I alone know what has occurred—remember that there is Anna Lee to live for.”

A cold sickly chill ran through Paul’s every vein and crowded into his heart.

"Come, come," said Winford once more, "be a man."

"Be a man! Never again—never again."

"Stuff. The idea of saying you meant to kill him."

"I don't know what I say."

Paul leaned against the mast, with his head in his hands, and rocked himself to and fro.

"Now, then, don't give way like that," said Barns, taking him by the arm, and thinking exultingly to himself "he's in my power now I have need of him."

"Oh, Winford, I shall go mad!" Paul exclaimed, tearing himself from his grasp, and rushing to the side of the vessel.

Barns was upon him in a moment, and he held him with a grip of iron.

"Fool!" he exclaimed. "Coward! Have you no thought for Anna Lee? where's all the love you talk of?"

Barns knew how to play upon Paul Massey. He could govern every stop,

sound him from the lowest note to the top of his compass.

"Yes," he said, "I did not intend to kill him. No, no, I would have saved him."

"Come, rouse up, you are like a fellow that's drunk—come;" and Winford shook Paul, who staggered, and would have fallen but for Winford's assistance.

"Remember," he said, "remember—you might be arrested for *murder*" (the last word, hissed into Paul's ear, did more to rouse him than anything else); "but I am your friend, Paul; cheer up,—I'll *never* desert you."

Paul felt that there was a change in Winford's manner towards him, almost a threat in the tone of his voice.

"You'll not betray me, Winford," he said faintly, the thought of conviction, in the sight of Anna Lee, completing the load of fear and dread and horror which pressed upon him.

"Never! Come, come; a lurch of

the vessel—fell overboard by accident—a little too much wine—struck his head against the boat as he fell—the crew saw me hold you when you wished bravely to risk your own life. Come, come, Paul, cheer up, man! There is only one fellow less in the world, and you can do without him, for he was your rival. Come, come,” and Winford led Paul to the side where the men were clambering aboard.

And now grey streaks in the east gave token of the advent of another day. To Paul Massey light seemed to come with marvellous rapidity, and to glare upon him, to taunt him with his crime, to light up the scene of his wickedness for a vengeful purpose. Morning was breaking, though Harry Thornhill was no more; the morning had come, ay and the steamer too, both asking for the friend whom Paul Massey should have given up to them, safe and living as he was in the flesh when he stepped on board Paul's ill-starred ship.

A long black streak, like a mourning plume, hung from the funnel of the distant steamer, growing bigger and bigger as it neared the point of rendezvous.

The steamer's boat was lowered; the yacht's boat met it half-way with the sad message; then the two boats parted, and the steamer continued its long journey.

The sun shone out brightly, glimmering on the white sails of ships making their way up and down the channel. Helswick, with its one tall spire pointing heaven-ward, presented its varied projections to the morning beam, and the breakers could be seen, white and sparkling, on the black rocks near Denby Rise. It was a bright and cheery picture, but sad and wearisome and torturing to Paul Massey, who could only think about a pale ghostly form, going down, down, into the depths of the sea, with the mark of his murderous fingers upon it. He could see it drifting, drifting, helplessly,

with its eyes glaring upwards, appealingly, tenderly, rebukingly. No sunshine could gild that cold dead face; no breeze of morn or evening lift that dank hair, which clung about the pale damp brow; no haven give rest to that wandering corpse, tossed about by varying currents, or starting up to frighten poor fishermen, until the waters gave up their ghastly burden, and wondering landsmen, on some distant coast perchance, buried the unknown, unrecognized human waif of the mysterious sea.

Paul Massey's imagination thus pictured the poor corpse through all its possible chances; whilst its glazed eyes seemed to be always fixed upon him and their rebuke was: "When you were in peril, on this same sea, I risked life and all its brightest hopes to save you—*you*, Paul Massey!"

CHAPTER XII.

MORE SHADOWS.

THE message of death sped rapidly along the coast, and sent groups of people down upon the beach, looking wistfully at the sea, and wondering whether the waters would give up the lonely body. In expectation of reward sundry boatmen launched their tiny vessels, and kept a sharp look-out when the tide came rolling in.

From morning till night, Anna Lee sat with swollen eyes, looking out upon the sea.

Mr Mountford, who had been unwell during several days, went to his bed that night, never to leave it.

Winford Barns wrinkled his brows,

smoked the strongest cavendish, and drank brandy, in the cabin of the yacht.

Paul Massey, pale as a ghost, wandered about the great house, struggling with this horrible secret, and wishing that he were at the bottom of ocean's deepest depths. It was in vain that he made an effort to soothe and comfort Anna Lee. Her very presence was a reproach to him, and his touch was pollution.

Anna looked up into his face, through her tears, and leaned upon his shoulder, and pitied her dear Paul. He must not give way! How pale he looked! It seemed very hard; but it was God's will, and they must bend before it!

Mr Mountford came to the grief-stricken pair, and joined his consoling words to Anna's. Now and then, however, he could not keep back bitter reflections in his sorrow. Why did not Paul leap after his friend and save him? Happiness, he said, had fled from Denby Rise ever since Paul Massey had entered

its portals. But Mr Mountford followed up his hasty words with ample apologies. His sorrow had overcome him: he was not well, and they must forgive him.

Mr Mountford did not know that his reproaches were some little relief to the conscience-troubled Paul. Anna Lee's tender words cut him to the quick. If she had cursed him, if her uncle had denounced him as a murderer, he felt that it would be happiness compared with his present guilty misery.

Once in his frenzy he glared upon his host, and had nearly exclaimed: "I killed your friend, sir; I, Paul Massey, am a murderer." But the soft tearful eyes of Anna Lee would not let him; and burying his pale face in his hands, he prayed to die.

The spring sunshine went peering about the place, trying to penetrate the gloom which the drawn blinds made in the gabled house. It flashed across the bay, and brooded upon the heaving

waters, as if to question them. But the sea ebbed and flowed, was white and green, toyed with the shells, tapped the fishing boats, played with the weeds, went in and out the caverns, as it had done a thousand times before: it put on no mourning for Harry Thornhill. The steamers went up and down the channel; white sails glimmered in the sunshine; the sea-gulls dipped their breasts in the waters; the clouds made shadows upon the great mirror, and the waves made music with the pebbles, just as they had done on the previous day. Anna Lee might imagine the music an oceanic requiem, and picture the waves rocking Harry Thornhill in everlasting repose; but there was no change in the sea—the unchangeable, unimpressible, mysterious ocean, big with mighty secrets, rich with the spoils of centuries, treacherous as hell, smiling as it kills, singing whilst its victims cry in vain for help, playing with shells on a sandy beach, and

smothering strong men and helpless women in its cold bosom. To Paul Massey the waves seemed to be uttering a continual taunt; but what cared the ocean for Harry Thornhill, when its coral caves and weed-bedecked halls contained millions of pale guests as deeply mourned as he?

Stray sounds of the Helswick passing bell wandered to Denby Rise, in the track of the chimes which went in at the windows on a certain memorable Sunday: and Mark Mountford put his hand on his heart and felt satisfied that ere long the rope would be pulled again. Oh, it was a sad, sad day for Denby Rise! And the news of Harry's death cast a gloom over Maryport too.

Beckford Square pulled down its blinds, its many-hued blinds, its brown and gray and white and green and yellow blinds. The bell of the old church close by, sobbed all day long, and flags drooped half-mast high from the shipping that peered

over the house-tops and looked into the Square. Francis Grey felt the pangs of his first great grief.

It has been said, and supported by much evidence, that "the first symptom of approaching death, with some, is the strong presentiment that they are about to die." It is recorded of Fletcher that he ordered his tomb to be prepared, and that the grave was not dug a day too early. Mozart composed his Requiem under the belief, which was soon verified, that "it was for himself he was composing the death chant." The morning before he died, Wolsey asked Cavendish the hour, and when the reply, "Past eight," was given, he said: "Eight of the clock! that cannot be—eight of the clock, nay, nay, it cannot be, for by eight of the clock you shall lose your master." The prediction was correct so far as the hour was concerned: Wolsey died at eight o'clock the next morning. John Hunter, who fore-

told his own death, explained the mystery: "We sometimes feel within ourselves that we shall not live; for the living powers become weak, and the nerves communicate the intelligence to the brain."

It was something in the spirit of these men of the past that Mr Mountford felt called upon to make known to his household that his days were drawing to a close. Sorrow having once entered the house, was in no hurry to leave it. Her shadow was upon Denby Rise, and the spring sunshine could not drive it away. The blinds were drawn up again. But nothing would dismiss the sombre visitor who sat upon the hearth and filled the house with gloom.

Mark Mountford, with his head lying back upon the pillows, and his eyes fixed upon Anna Lee, reminded her of his conversations, long ago, in which he had foreshadowed the day when he would have passed away. He spoke cheerfully of the approach of the time that was coming, and said he should die happily, because he

would leave her with a protector. That protector was not to be Harry Thornhill, but Paul Massey. Harry's removal was a just punishment for his own attempted interference with the decrees of God. He accepted it, with all humility, and was content to leave Anna with one who loved her with equal fondness. But before the day, which was not far distant, came, he would wish the marriage to be solemnized.

To Paul Massey the old man spoke in a similar strain, and Paul bowed his head, as though he stood before the Judge who would weigh him in the balance. If the devotion of a lifetime to Anna Lee, if prayer and penance, if years of penitence, could wash away his crime, Paul felt that he could wipe it out. Though he had roused the slumbering lion in Harry's nature, Harry was the aggressor in the struggle on board the yacht. Oh, that he had borne the blow calmly ! He had deserved a hundred blows. To doubt Anna, and to embitter the last parting of Harry,

with jealous taunts, were worthy of the severest chastisement. But to feel that the brand of Cain was upon him, was to suffer a burning sense of misery and shame and degradation that almost weighed him down. He feared to remain with Mr Mountford alone. It seemed as if an unseen eye was upon him, and the nearer the invalid drew towards the solution of that great mystery of the future which we shall all one day understand, the closer did Paul feel himself to the accusing gaze of the unseen witness.

Days, miserable days, passed away, and Mr Mountford grew weaker. One evening after interviews with Paul and his niece, preparations were made for a marriage ceremony. He could not die happily without leaving Anna Lee a sworn Protector. It might be wrong for him to seem to interfere again with the decrees of Providence, but he could not help feeling that he should be only fulfilling his duty,

and at the same time he should be enjoying a last great pleasure in witnessing a union that now appeared to be fraught with happiness to his dear Anna. To give her away to the man whom she had chosen, seemed to be all that remained for him to accomplish.

Paul Massey had heard all this, and had permitted the arrangements for the marriage to go on, but with a secret fear that they could never be carried out. It would be impossible, he thought, for him to allow such a diabolical business to proceed. Marry Anna Lee to a murderer! Better exposure, better death! He would tell all and give himself up to justice, or bury himself beneath the waters that had swallowed up his friend.

Winford Barns found Paul in this state of mind a short time before the day fixed for the marriage. It did not suit Winford's plans that Paul should continue in it. To say nothing of the absurdity of standing on a gallows to be gazed at by a

sweating crowd of the scum of creation, Paul's idea of confession was, he said, a cruel one—cruel to Anna Lee, cruel to her uncle—and would bring disgrace upon the name of Massey that nothing could wipe out. Mark Mountford was on his death-bed. Would Paul leave Anna Lee alone in the world, to be intrigued for by hosts of adventurers? Would he leave her to fight the battle of life alone? Would he leave her to break her heart over the loss of the man she loved? Oh, it was monstrous! For his own part he did not set up as a saint, or a hero, but he would endure a few torments before he would act such a coward's part, were he in Paul's position.

The case was well put, and the decision was in favour of Winford's arguments. In the end Paul registered a vow that the remainder of his life should, so far as he had power to act, be one of devotion to Anna Lee. The dearest wish of Harry Thornhill's heart was her happiness; and

though he could not hope to erase the great blot which had sullied his whole career, he would protect and love Anna Lee, and so regulate his life that no other crime should be added to the one which had shut heaven against him. It might or it might not be true that he had intended to kill his friend ; it was true that but for Winford Barns he would have risked his own life to save him. But no extenuating circumstance could blot out what was recorded.

Barns laughed at the higher principles involved in Paul's great resolve ; but said it was the right thing to do to stick to Anna Lee. As for Paul's wishing that he had leaped into the sea after his friend, that would have been sheer madness, and could only have ended in Anna losing two lovers instead of one ; the current was too strong for any swimmer, to say nothing of a heavy ground swell. If he had permitted Paul to leap over, he should have considered himself accessory to his death.

Anna Lee had placed her hand in her uncle's and acquiesced in all he wished. The evening shadows had fallen upon them through an oriel window, as they sat looking out upon the valley and listening to the music of the brook as it went on to join the sea. Mr Mountford had rallied considerably, and there seemed reason to hope that his own gloomy predictions might not be fulfilled. It made Anna more cheerful to think that, at least, part of the double blow which threatened them might be warded off. Her uncle had chatted with her about the future, and he had made her heart glad with praises of Paul Massey. The old man had stroked her fair hair, with his white hand, and been garrulous about their pleasant rambles. During his talk many a golden precept and beautiful thought had fallen from his lips, and many a studied word on the duty of resignation to the will of God; for Mark Mountford had laid to heart the lesson of the brook, and knew how close

at hand was the great sea of eternity, towards which he was journeying.

Why need we dwell longer upon this part of our story? why make several chapters of what may be told in one? Did not the marriage of Paul Massey and Anna Lee, followed the next day by the death of Mark Mountford, Esq., form the subject of conversation along the coast for many months? Do not the people thereabouts point out to strangers the house in the valley? Has not many a tourist said to fellow-travellers: "If that story were put into a book one would be apt to say it was unnatural?" You knew nothing about it, you may say. Perhaps you think we have invented the whole affair? Perhaps you think there is no house in the valley? Perhaps you think we have sat by the sea and imagined all we have narrated?

Ah, you should have stood, with us, a spectator of that marriage in the fine old drawing-room! You should have seen the

sun-light flooding in upon Mark Mountford in his high-backed chair ; upon Anna Lee, with her soft grey eyes full of tears ; upon Paul Massey, pale and careworn, but handsome still ; upon Mrs Grey, buxom and rosy despite her troubles ; upon Joe Wittle, with his hands in his big waistcoat-pockets ; upon the well-dressed group of servants, with an imperious fellow, in plush, towering above the rest and looking down with a smile of pity upon Joe Wittle ; upon the parson in his white gown ; upon Winford Barns standing aloof, as though he pulled the strings of the whole affair.

You should have stood by Mark Mountford's bed, four-and-twenty hours after the marriage ceremony, as he lay with his hand in Mrs Massey's. You should have seen how gentle death will sometimes be with a good man ! You should have heard the true-hearted old man say : " Paul, you will be kind to her, and protect her ? " You should have seen

Paul bow down his head, and have heard him, whilst choking with emotion, say "Always, always." You should have seen those silent tearful groups of domestics outside the room. You should have seen that form which, at length, lay silently on the white bed, with Anna praying by its side. You should have heard the faint whispers of the solemn peal which the silver bells sent to condole with the mourners at Denby Rise. You should have wandered through the great house, and noted the soft tread of its inmates, as though they feared to wake one that slept. You should have walked into the library, and noted the vacant chair where the master had sat with his books. You should have seen how solemn and sad the familiar volumes looked, on their tall shelves, waiting the touch of the hand that would turn their leaves no more. You should have seen Joe Wittle sitting on that old bucket in the stable with his head in his hands, bemoaning his master to Hark-

away, and you should have noted how the horse, as if it understood that Joe was in trouble, rubbed its nose on the familiar fur helmet.

Then you would not have doubted our story. Then you would not have said we fancied it, or that the sea whispered it to us, or that Denby Rise was not in the valley near Helswick.

You can hear the silver bells any Sunday morning. When you do hear them, rising above the murmur of the sea, think what changes they have rung upon the ears of Anna Lee, and Paul Massey, and Mrs Grey, and Joe Wittle. Commune with the chimes, thoughtfully, and they will tell you the story all over again. Tune your fancy to their sweet tones, and they will become merry and sad as you list. They will travel drowsily, yet happily, across yon bend of the coast, climb the rocks and whisper in at the windows of Denby Rise, as they did on a certain

memorable Sunday. They will mingle their voices with that of the sea, and tell you about a fair girl sitting at her chamber window. They will tell you of the wreck that followed; whilst the sea washes at your feet, and smiles at you as if it hugged itself on its greater knowledge than the chimes. The bells will not heed the egotism of the waters, but will go on chattering to you, singing, or whispering as you will; until at length they become sad and plaintive and piteous, jangling out of tune, and wailing and touching your heart-strings with their dolorous music, and carrying your thoughts to the churchyard, where a marble slab rests amongst the grass, over the mortal remains of Mark Mountford.

Fickle bells! Tender bells, babbling bells! Are you really the same that clash forth merry notes on the wedding morn, and make painful peals, when graves are opened beneath the shadow of your mys-

terious home in the church tower? If so, are ye governed by spirits as various as your varying notes? Are ye inhabited by genii that control your changing voices? Do angelic throngs people your brazen domes, when Sunday comes, to make your tones prayerful and religious, to tune your voices to the organ's pealing and the choral chant? Do merry sprites whirl and twirl and gambol through your big stone room, and forge those tinkling, ringing, sparkling, trilling, clanging notes that greet the bride as she steps out from the grey old porch upon roses flung by village children? Do the mystic messengers of mighty magicians give meaning to your voices, when boys hear you say strange things such as Dick Whittington heard? Do tricky sprites govern ye when ye tell a man whatever he wishes you should say, when you repeat his own thoughts and make him take your words for omens? Do spiteful, vengeful, demoniac fays influence you when you tempt men to direful

deeds, with tales of blood at midnight?
Do the good angels come back to you
when you mourn for the dead, when you
preach with such solemn beauty the great
sermon of mortality?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREYS.

WE take up the thread of our story after an interval of four years.

On the death of Mr Mountford, Mrs Grey, to whom the good old gentleman had bequeathed £1000, went to Maryport to live with her two sons, Richard having been taken into the counting-house of Welford and Co., as a junior clerk.

Francis Grey had received rapid promotion. Indeed, he filled up the vacancy, left by the junior partner, so successfully that the three partners had talked together about holding out to him the prospect of a share in the business, at some future day.

Frank was therefore enabled, with his mother's assistance, to provide a very com-

fortable home for the family. After making himself acquainted with the interiors of nearly every house in the western suburb of Maryport where "To Let" appeared in the windows, he had decided upon Tristram Lodge, Purdown. The Maryport people take special delight in giving their houses high-sounding titles. They discard numbers altogether. Long rows of residences, which a stranger would expect to find numbered, have distinct names and titles. It was in a row that Frank had picked out the lodge aforesaid. First there was Hampton House; next came Florence Court; followed by Gordon Villa, which was cheek by jowl with Dot Cottage, and contiguous to Tristram Lodge.

It was a pleasant row enough. Each house, or cottage, or lodge, or villa, had a pretty little patch of garden, walled in and separated from the neighbouring gardens, on either hand. At the bottom of each garden was a high wall, in the centre of which was a door, and in the centre of the

door a wicket, through which curious people could peep and see the centre door of the house.

Purdown was on the side of a sloping hill, overlooking the city, and high enough to be tolerably free from the smoke which hung, in a cloud, over the house-tops and chimneys and churches, that appeared on all hands as far as you could see, unless you were very long-sighted, and could catch a glimpse of the fields, upon which the clouds rested, in the far-off distance.

A vine climbed up the front of the house and hung about the ledge of the little drawing-room window, on the second storey. For Frank *would* have a drawing-room. Mrs Grey had resisted it, and Richard had ridiculed the idea of occupying any room but the kitchen. It was a pretty little kitchen certainly, looking out upon a portion of the garden; but Francis Grey pitied Richard's bad taste, and furnished not only what he called a drawing-room, but a dining-room also.

It is true the furniture was not very costly, but it was good, and the cabinet-maker had readily consented to receive his bill by quarterly instalments. In the dining-room there was a mahogany side-board (a little too light in colour), a table with removable leaf, a couch, and six chairs to match. These, arrayed upon one of the best Kidderminster carpets, were partially reflected in a very tall chimney glass, in front of which stood a dying gladiator, in bronze, and two china vases. The drawing-room was an attempt at a miniature representation of the grand drawing-room of Samuel Welford, Esq., who had once had Frank up to his house, on some urgent business, and had shown him his portfolios. Frank's imitation, however, was only on a very small scale, though the room was certainly a pretty little apartment of its kind, filled with "a superior suite of walnut drawing-room furniture in blue damask" (as it was described in Frank's bill of particulars), several ottomans, sun-

dry rugs, various pictures, two mirrors, a few statuettes, and a large amount of drapery.

This luxurious apartment was only used on Sunday evenings. On other nights in the week it was Frank's delight to stretch his legs across the dining-room hearth-rug, whilst reading his favourite books, or talking to his mother. For Richard Grey seldom went home until late, and he felt little or no sympathy in the conversations or studies of his brother. Both Frank's books and his talk, Richard said, were too slow and too stiff. For his own part he thought "Robin Hood," and "Hans of Iceland," and the "Mysteries of London," altogether superior to "Waverley," and the "Man of Feeling," and the "Vicar of Wakefield." But of course Frank had his own opinion, and he was quite welcome to it.

Mrs Grey secretly admired what she thought was a high spirit on the part of Richard. She could not help acknow-

ledging to herself that Frank was rather dull company, and that his aims were too much above his position. Richard would come home full of life and spirits, telling his mother all sorts of funny anecdotes, which he had picked up in the city, and shaking his brown curly locks with laughter. Frank would come home in capital humour, but in a much quieter mood, and would take the earliest opportunity of burying himself in a book. Richard had grown as tall as Frank, and looked quite a man, with his broad shoulders and his stalwart frame. Frank was darker, and what the world would call more gentlemanly in appearance, being a marked contrast, in this latter respect, to his brother. You might have taken Frank for the private secretary of some law Lord; whilst you would have put Richard down as a farmer's son with sporting predilections.

“I'll tell you what, mother,” said Richard one evening, “I shall not stop

in that humbugging counting-house any longer."

"Oh, nonsense, Richard," replied Mrs Grey, looking up from her sewing. Frank had not come home for the evening. Mrs Grey seldom sewed when Frank was at home. "Nonsense, Richard."

"It is not nonsense, mother, it's fact. What's the good of a fellow wasting his life in filling up forms about ships, and posting letters. I shall drop it. It's all very well for Frank, who can be a large card, and do the swell business up in his own room, and be invited now and then to Welford's place at the Elms."

"Richard, you forget that Frank has been in the establishment much longer than you have, and that poor Mr Thornhill was very friendly and kind to him."

"No I don't—I don't forget, and that is one of the reasons why I shan't stop. I shall never have the chance of getting on at Welford's as he has; and I mean to look

out for another berth. I should like to go for a sailor or a soldier."

Richard threw himself down all his length on the sofa, and looked a most tempting subject for the recruiting officer.

"My dear boy, you frighten me with such talk: do promise me you will not think of enlisting, or going to sea; do promise me," and Mrs Grey went to her son, kneeled down by his side, and patted his cheek. "Promise me that."

"I shan't," said Richard, pushing his mother's hand away. "Don't be silly, mother; you are always asking me to promise something or the other. Promise you'll be in at ten, Richard; or promise you will not make a friend of that Peter Foster; or promise not to stay away from dinner again; or promise something or other, always."

"Well, but Richard, you know—"

"No, I don't know, mother, and I ain't going to know; I've been made fool

enough of, what with Frank and you ; and I shall drop it, I tell you."

"I know Frank is proud, Richard, and has his whims and oddities ; but then, you know, he is very kind and considerate, and has been a good son."

"Oh, yes, that's all right as far as it goes, mother ; but if you were me—look at my big arms!—if you were me, would you like to be stuck in a counting-house all your life figuring about with a pen?"

"Well, my dear Richard, I daresay it is irksome, and we will see if something cannot be done. Your spirits are too great for it ; but don't be rash."

"See if something cannot be done ! I ain't going to have Frank and you worrying yourself about it at all. Frank's not to be bothering about me. I'll get something for myself, and I won't be humbugged."

"Why, what a strange mood you have come home in, Richard ; you who are so merry and so full of fun."

“I can’t help it. I don’t mean any harm to you, mother,” and Richard put his arm, in a rough kind of affectionate way, upon his mother’s shoulder; “but I tell you I shall stand this no longer. And what have you to say against Peter Foster?”

“Well, your brother does not like him.”

“Oh, hang my brother! Frank’s not my keeper, I suppose, is he?”

“Frank does not think Peter Foster a suitable acquaintance for you. You should give way a little to Frank; he is older than you are, and has had more experience.”

“Why, Peter Foster is as good as Frank any day. His father’s a chemist and druggist, and keeps three or four assistants, and a horse, which Peter says I can ride when I like.”

“But he is too old for you, Richard—you always seem to like to be with persons so much in advance of your years; but I suppose that is because you are so tall;”

and the fond mother looked with admiration upon her wilful son.

"So much older! Why, he's only twenty-three, and I'm nineteen next birthday. Hark! By Jove, that's his voice."

"You are not going out again, to-night, Richard?" said Mrs Grey, appealingly.

"Why not? It's only nine o'clock, and Frank's out? I wish you wouldn't bother me in that way, mother. Why can't I go out again if I like?"

Mrs Grey looked at the clock on the mantel-piece, and the time was later than Richard had said.

"Sarah, Sarah," shouted Mrs Grey's youngest son, going to the door, "tell Mr Foster to come in."

"I was just doing so," said a young man, not so tall as Richard, but looking at least ten years older. "How do you do, Mrs Grey?—pretty well this evening?—that's right—just going past to take a quiet stroll, and one cigar—thought I'd look in and see if Dick had come home."

“All right, my boy,” said Richard, before his mother had time to speak, “all right, I’m your man.”

No wonder Frank Grey had not a high opinion of Peter Foster. He was a dissipated-looking fellow, not, however, without a dash of the gentleman about him. He was well-dressed, wore a blue-and-white spotted neck-tie and a large pin, carried a cane under his arm, and assumed a medical-student air. For truth to tell, he was a medical student, and not likely to be anything more. Had it not been for the influence of his father, who was much respected in Maryport, he would have been expelled from the Maryport college, which was in the height of its prosperity at the period of our story.

Peter Foster had small blue eyes deeply sunk in his head, and circled by a little blue rim. His cheeks were red, but not the red of health, and he wore a short beard, carefully trimmed. When he spoke you felt that he was a hollow, selfish, reck-

less fellow ; that he might be a very jolly companion with one who could in any way administer to his pleasures, that he would consider his own feelings above any other's, and that he drank and smoked to the serious detriment of his health.

CHAPTER XIV.

KEEM'S HARMONIC BOWERS.

"WHERE shall we go, Dick?" said Peter Foster, when they were out in the Maryport streets.

"Oh, I don't care," said Richard, taking long pulls at a very strong cigar.

"To the 'Bowers of Harmony?'"

"If you like."

Peter Foster did like, and away they went, swaggering along arm in arm, turning down back streets and coming out again into broad ones, until at last they stood before a mysterious-looking house with half-closed windows on each side of an open door-way, dimly lighted.

Several women, gaudily dressed, were talking, in a high key, under the winking

lamp above the door. Peter Foster tapped one of the women very familiarly on the shoulder, with his cane, and passed into the "Bowers of Harmony," commonly called "Keem's Chop-House."

Right and left, on entering, were counters at which females highly-painted and decorated served other females and sundry gentlemen with glasses of spirits.

Further on was a rather extensive hall, in which there were a number of respectably dressed persons of both sexes, listening to a stout, fluffy personage, in a white neck-tie, singing a very sentimental tenor song. This was followed by a nigger dance, which was loudly applauded and encored.

Peter Foster and Richard Grey paused, for a few minutes, at the counter and partook of something, which Peter said was best taken neat; and then they walked forward to the singing saloon.

The chairman, who was smoking a long pipe, and sitting in a tall seat near

the orchestra, bowed most graciously to Peter and his friend as they pushed their way into proximity with The Chair.

Mr Foster shook hands with "The Chair," and seats were quickly at the disposal of the two new comers, who were apparently well-known by other persons in authority besides the chairman.

"Anything new to-night, Crib," said Peter Foster, after a pause.

"Well, no, nuffin' as I knows on; the baritone is a coming out with his 'Death's Head' and 'Jolly Bones;' but you 'eard the ballad in rehearsal."

"Ah—not a bad song—Sam wants more of a chest voice for it—but not bad by no means—no—who's that girl in the pink bonnet, Crib?"

"Don't know her," says The Chair, taking the pipe out of his mouth and looking round. "You're a wicked 'un, Peter, you are; but here's Jeffs;" and then the chairman rose and announced, as was his wont, the title of the next

song—" ' Keem's Harmonic Bowers,' ladies and gentlemen, by Mr Jeffs."

"Hear, hear," shouted several voices, amidst clapping of hands and thumping of tables.

Mr Jeffs was a little round-faced man, who did the serio-comic business of the "Bowers," and the song which he sang had been specially composed by himself, and had been printed for sale "by all music-dealers," with his own portrait as the frontispiece. It was a song very much in favour at the Bowers, each second verse being repeated as a chorus; the company knocking each other's glasses together in a famous concluding stanza. The ballad is too long to be printed in this history; but we may be pardoned for giving the closing verses as an indication of the class of song most acceptable to the company of which Peter Foster was a distinguished member.

Let's be merry while we can,
Every jovial fellow,

Ne'er a lad will be a man
Unless he's sometimes mellow.
Fill your cups up to the brim,
Drain your flowing glasses,
Down with him, who, sink or swim,
Will not pledge the lasses.
(*Repeat as Chorus.*)

Life becomes a merry game,
When Bacchus joins Apollo;
What is wealth, or what is fame,
To those who boldly follow
In the tracks the gods have made,
Strewn with grapes and flowers?
Cheer up, my lads! For who's afraid?
In Keem's Harmonic Bowers.
(*Repeat as Chorus.*)

The last lines were repeated three times by the audience, who cheered their defiant reference to a futile attempt of some city magistrates to close the establishment.

As time wore on, the room became crowded, and the atmosphere vitiated with gas and tobacco smoke. Richard Grey, who had been there several times previously "for an hour or so," with Peter Foster, who had been an *habitué* of the Bowers for years, began to feel

the effects of the smoke and the brandy and water.

Peter Foster had been deputed by the chairman to rise and announce the next song, and did so with a flushed face and in a husky voice; whereupon a *blasé* looking woman, in a low dress, came forward and screamed out some half-dozen verses of a prurient ditty, with the words of which we shall not sully these pages.

Meanwhile, considerable laughing and shouting, in the neighbourhood of the counters at the entrance of the saloon, had tended much to the disturbance of the singing, and had elicited sundry requests for "order" by the chairman.

Richard Grey, whose head was muddled with wine and smoke, angrily shouted "Order—order." Counter-cries of "The Duke," "It's only the Duke," arose from the lower part of the saloon, where a thick well-built man was pushing his way, in company with what a novice would

have said, were two ladies of the highest fashion.

“Hang the Duke; who cares for the Duke,” said Richard Grey, flourishing his right arm above his head; “let the Duke shut up, and not disturb other people.”

“Hear, hear,” shouted several shabby-genteel gentlemen, who, even in this den of infamy, envied the popularity of the individual in question.

“Chair, chair,” cried the chairman, and the performances were brought to a stand-still.

By the aid of sundry waiters “the Duke” forced his way to a sort of private box, overlooking the stage, where the two ladies took their seats and looked at Richard through opera-glasses.

Dick, though he had resumed his seat, still persisted in saying, “Hang the Duke,” “Blow the Duke,” “Who cares for the Duke?” until it was he who had now to be called to order.

“Who is this fine fellow who wishes

the Duke such a disagreeable end?" said Winford Barns, coming forward to the chair; for Winford Barns had for some time been known as "the Duke" at the Bowers, having gained this title through his lavish expenditure of money, and his general extravagance. "Who is my friend with the curly hair?" said Winford.

"No friend of yours," said Richard, looking up and seeing several Dukes at once; "no friend of yours, blow you."

"Oh! but we will be friends," said Winford quietly, "what will you have?"

"Nothing at your expense," said Peter Foster, who was jealous of the Duke.

Richard was not jealous of any one; he was intoxicated.

"Go on—go away," said Richard, "go away, Duke. Ah! ah! a pretty Duke, upon my life, much more like a prig."

This sally raised a great laugh, in the vicinity of the chair, against Winford, although the Baritone was singing his

famous "Jolly Bones," and rattling two wooden imitations of human bones in a very grotesque dance.

"Come, fair words, fair words," said Winford, who had not long left the pleasures of the dinner table, "fair words, or foul blows may follow," and Winford's eye sparkled angrily.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the chairman, as Richard Grey rose and met Winford's threat, with a defiant look.

"Don't interfere, Jack Crib—the affair will be over in a minute," said Winford. "You have used words unbecoming a gentleman, sir; I must request your card."

"Card, be hanged!" said Richard, "I've no card."

"There's mine," said Peter Foster; "that will do all the same."

Winford Barns took Foster's card and threw it from him, contemptuously.

Foster was about to pick it up, but was prevented by Richard Grey.

"Pick that card up," said Richard to

Winford, leaping over the seat and confronting the Duke, "pick it up."

Here several persons rose and crowded about the disputants, and the confusion extended to the furthest end of the room.

Above all the din could be heard Richard Grey vociferating, "Pick up that card."

"Order, order!" shouted The Chair.

"Turn him out!" cried twenty voices.

"Who is he? what is it?" demanded twenty more.

"Pick up that card; pick up that card!" roared Richard Grey.

"Yes, pick it up," said Peter Foster, in a very small voice, and at a very respectful distance from "the Duke."

"Go it, go it," urged several men, who had drunk too much to say any more.

Still the loudest voice of all shouted "Pick up that card."

In a sudden moment of passion, aroused by the defiant and contemptuous opposition of this "big boy," as he had sneer-

ingly called Richard, Winford Barns seized him by the collar, to eject him from the room.

Richard, like a young Hercules, wrested himself from Winford's grasp (leaving part of his coat-collar in his adversary's hand), and in a moment sent Winford sprawling over a table, amongst glasses of brandy, and bottles of beer, and broken pipes, and cigar ashes.

A round of applause greeted "the big boy's" performance; but it had scarcely commenced when the two ladies from the private box rushed upon him, with dire intent. At the same moment a strong hand seized Richard by the shoulder, and bursting through the orchestra door, dragged him beneath the stage, along a dark passage, past some stairs—at the top of which there was a great noise of men and women talking,—and out into the open air.

"I thought *I* could manage you," said a voice, which Richard immediately

recognized. "You may thank your stars, my lad, that I followed Master Barns to-night."

"Why, it's Mat," said Richard, who was sobered by the sudden fight and a cry of police. "How came you there?"

"Never mind that just now, come along here," and Mat drew Richard into an archway where they could command a view of the entrance to the "Bowers of Harmony" without being seen. There was a crowd round the door, and by and by a stretcher was brought, and Winford Barns was laid upon it.

"They are taking him to the hospital," said Mat, "it was a stunning whack you gave him."

Richard felt a deadly sickness of fear come over him, when Mat added: "Perhaps you've done for him."

Three policemen came out after the stretcher, with Peter Foster and the chairman in custody.

"There, we've seen enough," said Mat,

taking Richard by the arm, and leading him to the adjoining quay. "It was lucky I was there, very; you'd ha' been in the hands of the beaks if I hadn't."

Mat Dunkum,—who was dressed in a different costume to that which he wore when first we introduced him to our readers, but who still looked half-landsman, half-sailor,—conducted Richard to the quay amongst the shipping. Richard went along, in a sort of stupor, with one hand in his pocket.

They made their way through sheds full of packages and hampers, over baulks of timber, past cranes, and over chains and anchors, until they were almost out of the lamplight; until the sky looked clearer above them, and the masts of the vessels appeared to grow taller.

At length Mat put his foot upon a plank, and motioned Richard to follow, cautioning him as he did so to be careful of his footing. Over the plank, across a

steamer, over a Dutch brig and an American cutter.

"All right—master of the *Harry*," said Mat to several dock watchmen who had intercepted their way; and now he cried "Halt" to Richard.

"Here we are," said Mat, "you must sleep here to-night—they'll never think of looking for you on board Winford Barns's yacht. I'll go and see how things look."

Richard Grey threw himself down upon a couch, and wondered what would be the end of the night's disturbance.

"Supposing the fellow's killed or half killed," he thought, "serve him right—the infernal ass. But what if I should be taken? That wouldn't be so pleasant. There's one thing in it—they couldn't hang me; it would be manslaughter, and I should get three months, perhaps. Well, who cares? In for a penny, in for a pound. I wanted a change of some sort. I hate work—I hate everything, somehow. There's that brother of mine, with his cant and

his humbug; he'll make a pretty row, I guess. Well, let him. I'll make a bolt of it. I'm blowed if I wouldn't just as soon be a prig as humbugging in that counting-house of Welford's. Wonder what they'll do with Foster. Dash it, I'm sorry they grabbed him. Old Crib! Upon my soul, I can hardly help laughing at old Crib. What a funk he was in, to be sure.

"I don't much like stopping here by myself. Wonder if there's any grog aboard. It's deuced dark; what's the good of a lamp like that? It ain't half such a bad cabin this, either. Wonder if old Mat does anything in the smuggling line now;—that's the sort of thing. I shouldn't mind going into that,—or a bit of pirating; but I suppose that's no go in these days."

Such were the character of Dick's thoughts and reflections as he gradually went off into a sound sleep.

If, on awakening, he could have been draughted either into the army or the

navy, no matter which, and sent straight away on active service, he might have done a rash, brave deed, and risen into a hero. That would have very materially altered this story, as our readers will presently see.

CHAPTER XV.

“WAITING UP.”

MRS GREY was nursing her foot and her thoughts when Frank Grey returned.

“Well, mother,” said Frank, taking her face between his hands and kissing it, “how much for your thoughts?”

“They would not be profitable to buy, Frank—not by any means a good investment, as you would say.”

“Come, come, mother, no sad thoughts—cheer up, cheer up! Where’s Dick?”

“He went out for a little walk, a few minutes since.”

“Alone?”

“Don’t be too inquisitive, Frank.”

“Well, I will not, mother; but I very much fear Dick is giving you, as well as

myself, serious cause for uneasiness. He left business to-day an hour before the time for closing."

Mrs Grey went on nursing her knee, and sighed. "Ah, Frank," she said, "I fear we are a divided house."

"Nonsense, mother, you are sad to-night, and see things through shadows."

Mrs Grey was annoyed at herself for not having made a strenuous effort to prevent Richard from going out with Peter Foster ; more particularly as she feared that Richard had left the house in no mood for an early return to it. But her blind love for her youngest son would not let her be just, either to herself or to Frank. Moreover, she felt that she ought to tell Frank that Peter Foster had taken Dick out ; because Frank on many occasions had cautioned her against Foster, and had strongly urged upon her to do her best in aiding him to sever the connection which Richard had formed.

"You see, Frank, your ways are so

different to ours," said Mrs Grey, looking into the fire.

"*Our* ways, mother; what do you mean?"

"Well, Richard and I don't seem to please you?"

"Really, I don't understand you," said Frank, "have I ever done an unkind thing towards you, mother?"

"No; it isn't that," Mrs Grey replied, "but Richard and you don't agree."

"Don't agree! we never quarrel," said Frank, more and more puzzled at his mother's words, though he was not ignorant of her being more attached to Richard than to himself.

"Richard is not happy, I'm sure," Mrs Grey went on, "he as good as told me so this afternoon."

"What can I do to make him happy?" Frank inquired, taking a chair beside his mother.

"I don't know, Frank. But couldn't you associate a little more with him, and

be more indulgent, and not want him to be so grand, and so punctual at the office. I'm sure I wonder the boy has put up with that office as long as he has." And Mrs Grey nursed her foot and looked into the fire more intently than ever.

"Mother, mother! don't be unkind. You know how I have striven; you know how constantly I have used my little influence in his behalf; you know how I have talked to Richard."

"Talked! yes, that's *it*; you talk too much to him: you talk of things he doesn't care about, Frank; you read books in which he has no sympathy; and, and I—I—I—really don't know what we shall do-o-o-o." For want of something else to say, or because her heart was too full, Mrs Grey fell a crying.

Frank soothed her, and said many comforting things, for the purpose of driving away her sadness. He promised to try a fresh way with Dick; he vowed that, in future, she should lay down rules for his

guidance in the manner of treating Dick. He would have an explanation with him, would learn what his wishes were, and do his utmost to carry them out. But all this did not bring Mrs Grey out of her tears.

By and by, Frank went to bed, and bade his mother good-night, without saying any more concerning Richard's absence.

Mrs Grey wished he had said something; for she had almost felt inclined to confess that Richard was in Foster's company, and to ask Frank to find him and bring him home.

"You may go to bed, Sarah," said Mrs Grey, "I will 'wait up' for Richard."

The domestic left candles, and departed.

Mrs Grey did "wait up," and a weary waiting up it was. Hour after hour she sat counting the minutes. It reminded her of that first night after her husband had left her, years ago, when Dick was a

little boy. Every step was Dick's until they went by the door.

The clocks, in the city, went on chiming the quarters, one after the other, and striking the hours, until at length the fire went out, and Mrs Grey fancied she saw indications of daylight in the sky.

Once or twice she had peeped through the blind, and once or twice she thought she saw a figure steal away from beneath the outer wall.

At length she became so nervous and frightened, that she went up to Frank's door. She stood there for some moments, before she could make up her mind to knock.

"Who's there?" at length Frank inquired.

"Only me, dear," said Mrs Grey, walking in, pale and agitated, with a candle in her hand.

"What is the matter, mother?" inquired Frank, starting up.

"Oh, I'm so frightened, so miserable,

Frank," said Mrs Grey, sinking into a chair.

"You have not been to bed," said Frank in alarm; "what is the matter?"

"Oh, Frank, Frank! Richard has not come home yet, and he went out with Peter Foster; and—oh, dear—oh, dear—I really think somebody is watching the house."

"Don't be frightened; don't be frightened, mother; I will get up. What is the time?"

"Nearly four, Frank—I don't think it safe for you to go out, though—it's not daylight."

"All right, mother," said Frank, hastily putting on his clothes.

When he was dressed he conducted his mother to her own room; and sallied forth in search of his brother.

A few hours afterwards, the *Harry* was gliding down the Maryport river, in company with tug-boats, and high-masted

ships, and barges, and pilot smacks, and timber rafts; past wharves and warehouses; past river-side inns, with balconies and tea-gardens; underneath bridges, and past country highways; round great sloping curves, and past green meadow-lands; beneath shelving banks, and under the shadows of fir trees and tall larches. And Richard Grey was fast asleep in Winford Barns's own berth, fast asleep with Winford's warm tiger-rug over him.

It was not until the *Harry* was rolling out into the wide reaches of the river, where it meets the sea, that Richard Grey opened his eyes in a bewildered wonder at his situation. Though he could not help thinking that he must be dreaming, he soon found that his headache was a splitting, throbbing reality. He could scarcely raise himself in bed. It seemed as if he were going to be sea-sick. The berth went round and round with him. The handsomely-chased chest of drawers chased the no less beautiful couch round the cabin.

An arm-chair, and a couple of mirrors, and several pictures, though they were all screwed into the well-polished panels and floors, joined in the general dance ; so that when Dick threw aside the rug and jumped out of bed, in despair, he fell, and went round and round with the rest. He lay in this state for quite half-an-hour, whilst the waves dashed against the window, and the fresh smell of the sea came through the key-hole of the cabin door. A little revived, at length, he got up, to be startled at his pale, haggard face in the mirror,—his matted curls, his torn coat, and his general wretched and dissipated appearance. With this came the remembrance of the preceding night's brawl, and a vague, foggy, headachy fear, that he had done some terrible deed.

Mat Dunkum entered the cabin as Richard was about to leave it.

“ Well, lieutenant,” said Mat, putting his hands into his pockets and looking at Dick smilingly, “ you’re in a nice pickle.”

“Yes,” said Dick, discovering for the first time that his right hand was covered with blood, from a wound on one of his knuckles.

“It was plucky, but not exactly discreet, my lad; leastwise it wasn’t cautious.”

“Tell me all about it, Mat,” said Dick, staggering to the wash-stand and opening it.

Mat told Dick something “about it;” and in doing so did not forget to extol Dick’s prowess and his own skill and courage in getting Dick into the yacht.

“You see, Dick, I didn’t desert you, though you cut me that night rather shabbily—Eh?”

“What, when I promised to come back again. Ah, you must forgive that, Mat—a petticoat, you know;” and Dick began to chat freely.

“Well, perhaps it was better for you; and, lad as you was, I didn’t wonder at that black-eyed little tempter getting you away.”

"Bessie Martin! Ah, she's a pretty lass, isn't she?"

"How long is it since you've seen her?"

"Oh, more than four years."

"You'll hardly know her now: oh, my eye, such a gal!"

"Is she, Mat? I'm so glad I've met you, Mat! Tell us about Bessie? Does she wear her hair in ringlets yet? Is it as black as ever? Come, captain, tell us, tell us."

"Didn't you used to write to her?"

"Sometimes."

"How long since?"

"Oh, two years ago or more now."

"Then you've heard nothing of her lately?"

"Never since her last letter—it's quite two years ago."

"Then maybe you don't know as her grandmother is dead?"

"No."

"Nor that she's in Beachstone's shop, at Helswick?"

“Her grandmother?” asked Dick.

“Grandmother, no; the girl, Bessie Martin. She’s Beachstone’s assistant. Didn’t you know that?”

“No! you astonish me.”

“Ah, I *could* astonish more nor you if I liked. You don’t ask me how this craft comes to belong to Mr Barns, and how I come to be the captain of her.”

“I’ve had no time to do so,” said Dick, “and I’ve such lots of things to ask.”

“Well, look here! Ahoy there! Ahoy—Brown!”

Mr Barns’s steward entered.

“Look here, Brown. Just put some soda and brandy in the cabin aft, and bring a bottle here at once for this gentleman.”

The soda-water refreshed Dick considerably, and when, by Mat’s directions, he had washed himself, Mat produced a portmanteau of Dick’s own clothes, with clean shirts and collars, and a note con-

taining a few smudged and tear-blotted lines of maternal affection, made to read as much like rebuke as a fond love-blinded mother could make them.

“There, come into my cabin when you feel better, and I’ll spin you the whole yarn out,” said Mat.

Richard Grey felt relieved when he found that his mother knew where he was, and the sight of his clothes was particularly comforting. He was so glad to have been spared a scene at home, and to be out of the clutches of the police, and to be under no necessity of going to the office, that his present position gradually became anything but irksome or uncomfortable. He would write a letter to his mother, and put her all right, and have a look at Bessie Martin; and then enlist. That’s what he would do. He was free now; he daren’t go back to Maryport; he would clerk it no longer, anywhere.

The vessel tossed joyfully, and the waves played a merry tune against her

sides. Under the influence of a wash, a change of linen, and a bottle of soda-water, Dick's headache began to leave him; and he went on deck, and then into Mat's cabin, "as fresh as a lark." But it occurred to him, immediately on entering, to ask, "Isn't it rather a mistake for your fellows to see me; do they know anything?"

"Leave that to me," said Mat; "you are all right. Barns will get better in about a week, and I'll take care he doesn't go against you, although the police have a warrant out."

"Well now, captain, tell me the rest of your story."

"I'll give you the heads of it, Dick. In the first place, you see this ere craft, which was Mr Massey's, is now Mr Barns's. Mr M. owed him some money, and he took part on it out in this yacht, which is as neat a sailer as ever skimmed the water. Well, I knows something about the debt in question which it wouldn't ha' been pleasant

for Mr Barns to hear me talk about; so he makes me captain of the *Harry*, and gives me enough pay to shut my mouth. I look after him a bit now and then, and as we'd been lying at Maryport for a fortnight, when we was only to have stayed two days, just afore going on a cruise to the coast of France, I thought I'd just see what sort of petticoats it was as kept him; I looked about, and sees my friend a sailing along with a couple of fast-rigged spanking craft, so I claps on a bit more canvas and keeps 'em in sight. They hove to at the Harmonic Bowers, and there we all anchored. Well, when I seed there were going to be a row atween you and he, I gets quietly up towards the scene of action. I knowed there was a back way under the stage, because I've heard Barns talk of it when he was drunk, as he had free pass behind. When I'd got you aboard the yacht, which I concluded was the safest place, I goes and sees the admiral at the hospital; but, Lord! he

was raving and a swearing like a maniac ; and they was cutting his hair, and plastering him up like a mummy. I gets into a bit of confab with the doctor afterwards, tells him as how I'd like to get the yacht down Denby way for a day or two on business, if he thought it would be that time before the Commodore would be well again. So says he, ' You may go, captain—it will be a fortnight before he's better, and there's no danger ; but it's rather a bad cut, and the broken glass makes it worse.' I saw the police at the same time, and says he's my master. I'd changed my clothes different to what they was when I rescued you, and I'll swear nobody would a known me again if I hadn't."

" I don't think they would, captain ; you were awfully quick about your work."

" Well, I finds out as the police are agoing to watch your house ; so I says to one on 'em, as I know'd you I'd go along ; ' particularly,' says I, ' as I would like to

see the blackguard, as hurt my owner, in custody afore I takes the yacht down to Denby.' ”

“If they had searched the yacht, Mat, whilst you were away?”

“I locked you up, my boy; besides they'd never a thought of searching the guvner's yacht. However, I goes with the police, and we waits, and waits, and waits; but, of course, no Dick turns up. There was lights burning, and at last your brother comes out: it was four in the morning, then. The police dodged out of sight, and says I, I'll go and watch that young gent, and so I does. When he gets free of Purdown, and was just going into that dark alley as leads to the river at the bottom, I stops him, gets him in a corner by the timber there, and hurriedly tells him all. ‘And then,’ says I, ‘if you wish to serve your brother, and save further disgrace, just you go home after a bit, tell the missus (your mother hasn't served me well, Dick, —but pass over that), and pack up Dick's

clothes in a portmanteau. At nine o'clock order a cab—say you are going out of town, if the police interfere, which of course they won't, your respectability being known—go to the railway station, where I'll meet you in another cab, and get the portmanteau smuggled into mine—I've some purchases to make at several stores, and then I can go on to the docks with my packages, and the tide serves at eleven.' Your brother was a good deal bothered, but, however, he did what I wanted; and here you are, with your duds, safe and sound."

"Thanks, Mat! Thanks! I owe you much for your kindness," said Dick, taking Mat heartily by the hand.

"—— thanks; I want no thanks, Dick; here's your health, lad, and may you always find a port in a storm."

"The same to you, captain," and Richard tossed off the brandy in a very different style to his brandy drinking in

Denby cavern some years previously.
“And now what do you propose to do?”

“Oh, just keep you clear of the police, until the admiral is well enough to order them to withdraw the warrant against you.”

“I suppose I may go ashore?”

“No you mayn’t—leastwise not for a day or two.”

“Can’t you drop me for an hour at Helswick to-night, Mat?”

“No, not for a minute; but you shall see Miss Martin before the week’s out, if you like. After two or three days’ cruising, I shall drop you at the cavern until I run to Maryport and make things straight with the owner.

The yacht rose and fell upon the water, rose on the tall waves, and went down into the watery valleys.

Bessie Martin saw it as she walked on the beach; had she known that *he* was

on board, how delighted she would have been. For she was thinking of Richard whilst the yacht was dancing before her eyes. She was thinking what a noble, handsome fellow he must be now; and how unkind it was of him not to write to her.

“Never mind, I am as good as he is after all,” she thought, “and I am sure I shall not fret myself about him. He has forgotten me, I suppose, forgotten all about the time when we were quite children together; forgotten how I went to the caverns for him, and we rode home side by side.

“Well, let him forget if he likes, I’m sure I don’t care; I could have plenty of sweethearts if I wanted them; but if Master Richard could only see me to-morrow. Oh, I think I would give a thousand pounds, if I had it, if he could but see me to-morrow.”

Strange that Richard should have been

talking about her at the same moment, and trying to urge Mat to put him ashore; strange that Richard was within half a mile of her, hoping that he might see her to-morrow.

Would to heaven the widest oceans had rolled between them!

Paul Massey and his wife saw the white sail flashing over the green water; and Paul speedily made her out. She hove in sight very near the spot where she had anchored on a certain night, for the purpose of putting a certain person on board a certain steamer.

“Check,” he said.

“Is that the yacht, love?” Mrs Massey asked, looking up from the board where a little mitred figure was supposed to be holding in check an ivory monarch.

“I don’t know, my dear—don’t open the window, love—the air is quite chill to-night—king to move, Anna.”

Yes, you may say check, and you may

explain that clever move to Anna; but those big white pearls dancing at the prow of yonder vessel are just over the spot now, Paul Massey; and you cannot check-mate memory.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COUNTING-HOUSE AND THE HOSPITAL.

MRS GREY blamed the whole of Richard Grey's disgrace to Peter Foster. Her boy was too generous, too confiding, so easily led astray. It was the same with his poor father; and no wonder, for he was the very image of her husband. No woman had such troubles and trials as she had. Why was it? She had never done anybody any harm. "Oh, cruel, cruel! it was cruel, George, for you to leave me," she went on apostrophizing her absent lord; "but you were deceived, George, you were deceived, and you'll live to see it."

It was no use Frank attempting to prevent his mother from talking. She

rocked herself to and fro, and wailed forth her complaints.

“And that man who has taken him away again, that man who has ruined my poor boy, perhaps he has a hand in the whole affair; it may be only a plot. I know I am foolish, Frank, I know I am: but consider my troubles, consider my troubles, think how I love my children. How was Richard to know that it was an improper place? How could he have known, Frank? Oh, I wish I had told you about that Foster; he is the one that's to blame, and yet the police have discharged him, have actually let him go, and are looking for my boy. Oh, Frank, you must save him, and if he cannot come back again let me go and live with him, and take care of him for your poor father's sake, whom you will yet see, I pray will yet return.”

“See him, mother! I have no wish to see my father—I hate him for his treatment of you,” said Frank, stamping across

the floor. He had striven hard to sit quietly and not interrupt his mother's complaints, but it cut him to the quick that her love and all her thoughts should cling about those who had wronged her so much, to the exclusion of himself. From childhood upwards, he had been a thoughtful, affectionate son; Richard had been wilful, disobedient, and a tyrant; their father had deserted them and their mother, at a time when most they needed his protecting aid; and yet all her love was for Richard and the father.

"It maddens me, mother, to hear you talk thus; to see you grovel at the feet of a son who spurns you, and wail after a man who basely deserted you."

Frank's storm of passion stopped his mother's moaning, for a few minutes; she looked up at him in astonishment.

"Yes, I suppose that is how it will be—everybody against me—even you, Frank, even you. Well, the Lord's will be done. No matter who's feet I grovel

at, no matter whom I love; what I love always turns against me—husband and sons.”

Frank was touched at the poetic truth of this disappointment of her love, and, his passion over, he stooped to kiss his mother's forehead, and to urge her to look at affairs a little more calmly.

Until this morning Frank had never entered the office in Beckford Square later than ten o'clock. By the time that he had been to the station and returned—the police having ceased to watch the house—it was twelve o'clock. For the first time, too, he went along Maryport streets, with his eyes cast down.

He thought it necessary, immediately on entering the counting-house, to inquire if Mr Welford, the senior partner, had called that morning. The reply being in the negative, Frank Grey wrote a short note, and despatched it straight to Mr Welford's residence. Then he went up

into his own room—the room which had been Mr Thornhill's room—and sat down, feeling that this was the saddest morning he had known since the arrival of the news that the junior partner was drowned. But Frank was not the fellow to let even sorrow interfere unduly with his business duties; he was soon actively occupied in the examination of bills of lading, inventories of ships' stores, prices of freights, telegrams of arrivals, and other documents which belonged to his department in the great shipping house of Welford and Co.

Ere long, after a short knock, a tall gentlemanly man entered; Frank rose and received him with great deference.

The gentleman was Samuel Welford, Esquire—a man past middle age, with gray curly hair and whiskers, a fresh florid complexion, and a benevolent smile. His mouth indicated firmness, tempered with benevolence; and there was a store of good nature in his eyes. He was at least six feet, and he stooped slightly. His

dress was a black morning suit; a gold eye-glass peeped out from his waistcoat pocket, and he carried a gold-headed cane. This was Samuel Welford. Everybody knew him in Maryport; he was courted and flattered by all classes. He had twice declined the honour of representing Maryport in Parliament. Once he had been induced to fill the civic chair, during a famous year when the city had the honour of entertaining royal guests.

“Well, Mr Grey,” said the senior partner, coming forward and sitting down near Frank, “you wished to see me; I was just leaving my house when I received your note, and I make my first call, in the city this morning, upon you; for I am rather late in town to-day.”

“I was late too, sir, I am sorry to say, in consequence of a very disagreeable occurrence,” said Frank, stammering a little and becoming hot.

Frank had determined that the firm should first learn, from him, of the dis-

grace which had fallen upon him : for Maryport was all alive with the news that Frank Grey's brother had murdered a gentleman, in the worst den of infamy in Maryport. There was no knowing how the affair might affect his position in the house, and it was best that he should acquaint Mr Welford with the whole of the circumstances, and place his resignation in the hands of the firm.

"It is a serious business," said Mr Welford, after Frank had told the story, in which he extenuated his brother's conduct to the utmost; "a very serious business, and you have done right to tell me of it at once. We have always been successful in our confidential people here, Grey, and we should not like the reputation of our staff to be tarnished in the slightest degree."

"That is what I felt, sir," said Frank.

"There could be no damage to the house in any way, even if our best man was really to commit a murder, Grey; but

it would be very unpleasant to see the name of the firm coupled with his offence. We pride ourselves upon our managers and clerks, ay, and upon our captains too; and it is well you have mentioned this. Yes; did this fellow, this Barns, assault your brother first?"

"He did, sir," said Frank, "or I am sure my brother would never have raised a hand against him."

"I know the fellow, I know him—a sad scoundrel. Ah! it was a brave thing, after all, for the boy to encounter him. Yes, a brave thing; but not calculated to do good: no. However, he's only a boy—it will blow over, it will blow over," and Samuel Welford tapped his stick on the floor as an accompaniment to his words.

Frank, who had remained standing, looked anxiously at the head of the house, and in full expectation of his resignation being accepted, in a kind speech, coupled perhaps with an offer of some little appointment abroad.

“As to your resignation, Frank Grey, that will not be received.”

Frank drew a long breath of satisfaction.

“No,” continued the head of the firm, “I do not see that any reflection rests upon you ; nor indeed upon your brother, for half killing a scoundrel, who had assaulted him—the reflection upon your brother is that he was in such bad company. Boy or man, sir, he who resents an insult or an injury, manfully, is to be applauded ; but your brother’s manliness is sullied by brandy and tobacco and infamous companions. He is young, let us hope he will reform. Meanwhile your prospects in this house will not be influenced by this occurrence ; and you may go home and make your mother happy, by the information that, if I can do anything for your brother, out of Maryport, I may, within reasonable bounds, be commanded. Good morning, Frank !” and Mr Welford left the room more firmly than ever convinced that there

was the making of a thoroughly honest, straight-forward man of business in Frank Grey.

He might have been deceived in Frank, nevertheless; for, after all, Frank had only done just what a scheming scoundrel might have done. Villany, or Sycophancy, would, in all probability, have thought it a good stroke of policy to do what Frank did—to be the first to proclaim their undeserved disgrace; either one or the other might have counted it a safe stroke of stratagem to have drawn up a notice of resignation: so closely do villains, and intriguers, imitate the virtuous and the honest.

But Mr Welford was not deceived in Frank Grey, who was an upright manly fellow; too proud—though he was but the son of a runaway carpenter—to hold any position under false pretences; too high-minded to do an injustice to his employers; too sensitive to pass over any incident which affected his position or character,

without inquiry and explanation. He had started in life determined to get on, and with a fixed resolve to make an honourable name, whatever business or profession he undertook.

Don't imagine from this little picture of Frank, that he belonged to the stiff "good boy" school. You would neither find him whining at prayer-meetings, nor prating consequential nonsense at temperance elocution clubs.

Nevertheless, he was a religious young man. Though in his passion he had said he hated his father, it was only through love of his mother that he said so, and because he had never known his father except through the mother's great wrong. Though he had, in this same passion, spoken bitterly of Richard, he had done so because he felt that Richard was not worthy of his mother's deep love, and because his heart rebelled, for a moment, against his mother's injustice.

He went to church nearly every Sun-

day; he was absent sometimes; and yet we say he was religious. He kept the beautiful commandment, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," as much as any young man, or any old man, could possibly keep it. He went to the theatre now and then, and entered into the spirit of the performances enthusiastically, and had confessed to shedding tears over a celebrated actress's "Constance" in King John. Once he had fallen desperately in love with a lady who played Ophelia; and had received a slight wound in the heart, on hearing that Ophelia was the wife of a red-headed fellow who played second fiddle in the orchestra. But Frank was a good moral young fellow, notwithstanding. Amongst the books which he had carefully read might have been found the prose works of *Voltaire* and *Tom Paine*, and the marvellous poems of *Shelley*; and yet Frank had a full belief and hope in God, and said his prayers regularly and fervently. He liked to read both sides of all questions, and, in

his thoughtful way, defied such writers as Voltaire or Paine, rather than ignored them. He read them only that he should not tacitly condemn what he had not read; for, indeed, Frank was not fond of theological reading, and when revelling in "Queen Mab" he saw and sorrowed over the blots upon that marvellous work; but he felt, to the full, the magic of the poetry. Frank Grey was in truth every inch a gentleman; as all boys may become, whatever their origin, if they make up their minds to be so.

The Maryport hospital was not intended for such patients as Mr Barns. But the police having taken him there, not knowing where he lodged, he remained, to shock both nurses and doctors with his blasphemous ravings.

When Mat Dunkum called to see him, a few days after the accident, Mr Barns was progressing favourably. But he was liable to a relapse at any moment; for the

return of consciousness, with the memory of being beaten by a boy, would throw him into violent fits of passion, no less dreadful to contemplate than his delirious shouts of vengeance, and his maniacal laughter at "that fool Massey." In truth, the stupidity and presumption of Paul Massey was a theme upon which he had latterly said many wild things.

"I'll ruin him yet," he shouted, when Mat Dunkum and he were alone, "I'll ruin him, —— him."

"No, no, let him alone, Squire," said Mat, sitting down in the single chair, and looking calmly at the sufferer.

"Let him alone! Who do you mean? who do you mean? Let Paul Massey alone, —— him. I'll teach him who he's got to deal with!"

"He knows that pretty well, I guess," said Mat, straightening the disarranged bed-clothes.

"Knows it. Thirty thousand pounds

in four years, and grumbles, —— him. I'll have every penny, every penny."

The wretched man rose up in bed, and beat the air with his hands.

"There, there, Squire," said Mat, "that'll do; you'll only be worse."

"Dunkum, kill that young devil I met at Keem's—kill him, Mat—I'll give you a thousand pounds to finish him, the infernal rascal. Oh, my head! oh, my head!—the —— scoundrel—kill him, Mat;" and then the half delirious man sank back exhausted.

By and by he beckoned Mat to approach closer, and said in a more rational tone,

"You know that small ebony box of mine?"

"With the patent lock?" asked Mat.

"Yes, — it; don't ask questions, answer them."

"Well, I know it, then—it's in the cabin," said Mat angrily.

"Let me have it; when I'm well

enough I shall make my will, and you'll find it there."

"All right, Commodore," said Mat, smiling.

"Oh yes, you think I'm mad again, you think I'm raving; you're mistaken this time; I've an heiress, Mat, somewhere, and her mother's been to me just now in a dream. I can see her now—take her away—tell her I'll do it—I'll do it to-morrow."

And then the wretch raved again, staring wildly about the room.

"I left five pounds for her, myself—I did—go away, go away."

Was this mere delirium? Or did memory torture Winford Barns with a vision of the past? There were wild stories told of him, as you know, in the north. He had lived a desperate life before he knew Paul Massey—a desperate life of riot. Want of ways and means had, however, pulled him up short, just about the time that he made the acquaintance of the rich shipowner's son; and he

was compelled to raise money by various schemes that were by no means creditable. Paul, however, knew nothing of his dishonoured bills, and his mortgages, and his creditors. Paul only knew that he had been extravagant, that he was clever, and that he entered heart and soul into Paul's plans of travel and adventure. If at the time when Iago had turned round upon his passionate Othello, and had him in his grip, the love-mad Paul had been clever enough to hunt up the discreditable paper which bore Winford's signature; if he had been shrewd enough to have worked out a counter-plot against Barns, he might have found some bills that purported to bear his own signature. More than one banker had wondered why Mr Massey gave Winford Barns so many bills; but they were always paid on being presented, so the deception was never discovered. Winford took care the bills were duly met; and he dragged the money to meet them out of Paul Massey's coffers.

But we are straying somewhat from the point. Was the patient's reference to a woman mere madness, or a little of that torture which conscience will inflict sometimes upon men who have defied her power for years? Perhaps we shall learn as the story progresses.

Again delirium carried him back to the scene of his injury, and he shrieked for vengeance on Richard Grey, until his strength failed him once more, and he lay panting on the pillow.

"Humph!" said a voice, peeping into the ward, "you're a werry pretty specimen of 'umanity, you are."

"What the devil brought you here?" said Mat.

"I should think *you* were a sufferin' from a hoverflow ov the milk ov 'uman kindness on the brain," continued the voice, taking no heed of Mat Dunkum's fierce interrogation.

"Do you hear me?" said Mat, be-

tween his teeth, "you spying son of a witch."

"I hears yer, Master Dunkum; I hears yer; bless your handsome face, you're voice is not one of them ere soft and low voices as Shakespeare says is—"

"I'll Shakspur you," says Mat, seizing the diminutive groom by the collar, and dragging him into the ward.

"Hollo! hollo!" says an attendant, coming up at the moment, "this will not do."

"All right, guvner," said Mat, "I was only stopping this fellow from waking the Squire."

"Yes, it's all right," Joe Wittle replied; "I was speaking a little too loud for the patient; I will not do so again; I've come from one of his most hintimate friends to see him, and have got this ere note of permission," said Joe; upon which the attendant passed on, though the nurse came in immediately afterwards.

"Ah, I'm werry glad to hear that he'll

get over it, werry glad," said Joe, on receiving the nurse's report, though he could hardly be said to have looked what he said. "He's such a werry kind gentleman, and so relegious; thousands of blessed widders and orphings will be glad to hear it, when I tells 'em as Mr Barns is getting better. My master wouldn't wait a moment, when he heard of the melancholy affair, until I had started off to see how the dear genleman was."

"Take him out! Take him out!" exclaimed the invalid, attempting to rise, but laying his head back when he felt the strong hand of the nurse upon his shoulder.

"I'se obliged to be savage with him," said the woman, answering the inquiring gaze of Mat Dunkum and the groom.

Winford glared at her for a moment; but shut his eyes and was silent when the woman leaned over him and said: "Now look here, Squire, I'll not have any nonsense—off goes the bandage and on goes

another dressing, if you shows any more hobstrepering."

"Gentle as a lamb; he alers was, bless yer," said Joe, putting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, and propping himself against the wall.

"I think it's time you were off," said Mat Dunkum, scowling at the groom.

"Do you?" said Joe. "Werry likely; you see your thoughts ain't alers the coreck card, Mister Dunkum. I'm going to stay here till the doctor comes."

"Then stay and be hanged," said Mat, seizing his cap and hurrying out.

"Arter you, sir," said Joe, thrusting his hands into his waistcoat pockets and winking at the ugly old nurse; "arter you, sir."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MAY QUEEN.

RICHARD GREY had arrived at the caverns, contemporaneously with the razor-bills, and alca tordas, which, as is their migratory custom, had left them since the autumn. The dottrel had also just arrived on the heath above, and the landrail had returned to some meadows over the fell. He knew nothing of these arrivals, however, and cared nothing, when he crept beneath the rugs and blankets in the inner chamber of the caverns.

Mat had lighted the fire ; but there was a damp earthly smell in the place, which only seemed to exude all the more as the fire burnt up. Dick had drunk freely of the spirits which Mat had left for him, and,

with only his head uncovered, he felt thoroughly comfortable.

The fire flickered and crackled, and the light played all sorts of antics on the walls, now showing up a fowling-piece, now hovering mysteriously about a pair of oars, now throwing a dash of light upon an old sou-wester, now darting off into dark corners and shady recesses. The elfish flickers sent Dick off into fitful dozes, out of which he would start, grasping an old broadsword that lay beside him; not that he was afraid, but that he was valiant—for verily, if occasion had required it, Dick would have made terrible use of that antique weapon.

Mat had given the boy particular instructions not to stir from the caverns until he returned with news from Maryport; but an awakened interest in Bessie Martin was now so strengthened by his loneliness, that he could not help feeling a strong determination to go forth, on the morrow, and find Bessie out.

Old memories began to crop up, and mingle themselves, in fancies, with the fire-light. The school-house and the caverns, when his mother lived at Denby, and the incidents of his boy-life, gathered about memory's store-house, and flitted to and fro ghostily, like the fire-flickers, until he no longer grasped the old sword, and his head lay back upon the canvas pillow.

Then he dreamed of his stolen visits to the caverns, and of all his wild plans of piratical glory. He was out upon the sea, "with the black flag waving," and "his Bessie by his side." He ran his "gallant ship" into the harbour; the feast was spread; the pirate-villagers gathered round; there was the dance and the song on the sunny beach, and Bessie, the pirate bride, leaned gracefully upon the pirate's arm.

In another moment he was in Maryport; the gas-lamps were lighted, the streets were black and slippery; but Keem's Harmonic Bowers were radiant. He sat beside the chairman; jovial, noisy songs

were sung, and he applauded immensely. The serio-comic-grotesque vocalist, and author of the “original, screaming, quaint, quizzical, and grotesque medley, ‘Jolly Bones,’” had just finished the third verse of that favourite ditty :—

It's always in pictures
Death's a glass in his hand,
And it's only the fools
Who think it is sand ;
For Death's a sly fellow,—
Between you and me,
He often gets mellow—
And goes on the spree.
Tolol de ri day,
Tol de ri day,
Tol de roll iddle,
Toll lol de ri day.

Dick had clanked his glass with his neighbour's and joined in the chorus, when there was an interruption at the lower end of the room. He turned round and saw Winford Barns conducting Bessie Martin to a seat. Bessie Martin ! yes, it was she. Dick leaped from his chair and sprang to-

wards them ; but only to stand shivering in the middle of the room.

Morning soon came, after this ; but Morning would have nothing to do with Mat Dunkum's dark cavern. She opened her golden gates, and stood a-tip-toe on the high hills. She touched the sky, with her orient wand, and bright streaks shone upon it, which the sea copied and sped away with to the shore. She breathed upon the primroses, and they opened wide their eyes ; she chased away the tears which the violets had shed in the night ; and the blue-bells nodded their heads to the brown russet leaves in the forest, and told them that the sun was shining, upon which a few blind leaves shambled about to feel the beams as they had felt them in their green youth ; but the winds that waited upon the Morning blew them aside, and, lo and behold, green leaves and primrose-buds peeped up where the brown leaves had lain. Morning stood upon the high hills, and touched the birds with her orient

wand, and they shook their heads, stupidly at first, and then twittered and told each other it was day-break. She sent bands of special messengers, fleet rosy messengers, to peep into cottage windows, and awaken pretty maidens; and then hundreds started up and said: "It's May-day, it's May-day."

It was May-day! and a delightful remnant of the Pagan festival was still observed at Denby and Helswick, and all along the coast, and far away into the interior of the country.

May-day! Bessie Martin had no mother to call her early; but the goddess on the high hills did not forget her. Right over the roofs of Helswick, past the tall terrace where the visitors lodged, round by the church and into the little market-place, one of the rosy messengers sent a flood of sunlight through the diamond panes of a little garret window, and up started Bessie Martin.

And "I'm to be Queen," said Bessie,

pattering across the floor, with her little naked feet, and looking out over the sea ; for Mr Beachstone's shop, in which she was assistant, had such an out-look from its back premises.

“What a beautiful morning, I do declare, and I've a holiday all day,” said Bessie, looking smilingly into the glass, that hung by the wall. “And there's Cissy, and Mary, and Jane, and William under the window, already.”

She gently opened two panes, put her lips out as far as she could, and whispered, “I'll be down directly.”

Richard Grey groped through the matted old doorway of the cavern, and over the plank, and round corners, and over pools of water, until he was fairly in presence of the Morning.

The sun was shining hotly upon the water, in which the sea-birds were flapping their wings, and washing themselves, and fishing for their morning meal.

“That will be the best thing I can do,” said Richard, at the sea; and then he threw off the clothes in which he had slept, and dashed into the water.

One big sigh was all the cold waves wrung from Dick, after his plunge. The birds screamed and flew back to the rocks, the razor-bills, which had arrived the day before, expressing considerable disgust at this interruption of their first morning’s diversions. But Richard bellowed at the birds in return, and buffeted the waves, and swam out so far that the birds came back again, to be dispersed anew by the intruder.

Dick had only a cold breakfast after his bath, but he attacked the bread and meat, which Mat had left him, with a hearty relish, and washed it down with brandy and water. And then this wild, reckless, careless fellow, in spite of Mat’s warnings, climbed up the secret way and stood on the top of the cliffs.

“I’ve a great mind to go and find her,”

he said to himself as he looked towards Helswick. "No, no, better not now; to-night when it's dark," and he strode away over the fell.

"However, nobody will know me now—I've not been here for four years, and I'm as big again as I was; so I shall just go for a stroll, whatever you may say, Mat;" and away he went, over broken rocks, lying amongst purple and brown and yellow heath.

Then he came to meadows of mowing grass from which rose the voice of the land-rail; and he skirted hedges, white with hawthorn, in which the chaffinches were building their nests. He had often to go out of his way, to pass groups of happy children, who were gathering the May flowers. He paused sometimes to listen to their merry laughter, and then he could not help feeling like a guilty thing amongst innocence; for he soon knew that it must be May-morning, and he remembered how he and Bessie had plucked the primroses,

in years gone by, on merry May-mornings.

The groups of children grew more numerous as he proceeded. They ran from flower to flower, with gleeful shouts, filling their pinafores with buds and blossoms.

The kind old rector of Helswick had a May-pole set up annually in the meadow by his house; but he insisted that the flowers that decked it should be fresh gathered on the May morning. To enable this to be accomplished the shaft was not erected until the afternoon, when the Queen took her seat on her hawthorn throne, and the *fête* began as the sun went down. So off in the morning early went out the Queen, as well as her subjects, to cull the floral gems; whilst hundreds of little May-queens were made radiant, by poor mothers and sisters, to call at every house and to stop every person with, "Please to remember the May." Little toddling things, staggering under loads of flowers, went about Hels-

wick, from morning until night; but this was a degeneration of the old custom, and must have been introduced by a Barnum-mendicant. Nevertheless, it *was* a memento of good old days, and we shall give our coppers, whenever we visit Helswick, to poor little begging queens, though we do go and pay our respects to the real one.

You have learnt that Bessie Martin had been selected for the royal position on this May-day of our story. The choice had fallen upon her by ballot of her companions, as was the custom at the rectory festivals; and Bessie was not a little vain of the distinction. It was done at the Christmas tea-meeting (when the jolly old rector always chose to set the minds of the young people of his parish thinking about the spring), and, ever since, Bessie Martin had been in a little flutter of preparation. Several times, in that old-fashioned stationer's shop at Helswick, where she assisted the master and the mistress to wait upon the cus-

tomers, she had handed to customers note-paper instead of envelopes, and sealing-wax instead of wafers, because she was thinking about the dress she should wear on May-day. She had sat behind the counter, at night, in the dim uncertain light of two candles, and pictured herself in white muslin with pink ribbons; and she had said to herself: "Oh, that Richard Grey could see me then—oh, that the proud, fine gentleman, Richard, could see me then!" For Bessie had concluded that Richard had grown "a fine gentleman," and that this was the reason he had ceased writing to her.

Bessie had changed since we saw her last on that memorable night at the caverns. She had, in fact, become almost a woman. Indeed some of the customers had said she was too much of a woman to be a May-queen, but Bessie had shaken her black curls, and answered: "Please, I'm only just past eighteen." The rector's son from Oxford had told her (when old Beachstone's back was turned) that she would be the

prettiest May-queen he had ever beheld. Bessie had taken the first opportunity, when he was gone, to run up-stairs and look at herself in the square piece of glass that hung by her bed, and the scrutiny was quite satisfactory. Her dark cheeks glowed with health, and her eyes sparkled a great deal more than the mock-diamonds in old Mrs Beachstone's brooch. "Oh, if she had only a brooch like that!"

As Richard rambled along through the May-decked fields, he heard a voice which arrested his attention. He thought it sounded like Bessie Martin's voice. He peeped through the hedge, and there sure enough was Bessie, in the midst of a group of boys and girls, some about her own age, and others much younger. There she stood, with a hat in her hand, and her hair falling, from a crown of hawthorn, down her back. She might have sat for a gipsy queen, she had such white teeth, such red and brown cheeks, such black eyes.

Dick almost shouted with joy ; he had been so lonely before, and now he felt he would have somebody to talk to. But how was this to be managed ? how should he attract Bessie's attention, and get her away from her companions ? He feared she would not know him again, he had grown so tall.

"She's not tall," said Dick to himself ; "but how much older she looks, and how pretty !—and I not to have written to her !"

Shortly, all the young people sat down to arrange their flowers, when suddenly Bessie bethought her that she wanted one more spray of hawthorn, and before any one else could rise she darted off to the hedge behind which Richard was hiding. A fussy young gentleman, whom Dick had once or twice thought he would like to strangle on the spot, ran after her. Bessie reached the hawthorn first, and then Dick stooped down and said, "Bessie, it's Richard Grey."

“ Oh ! ” exclaimed Bessie, starting back.

“ What have you done ? ” asked the fussy young gentleman, as Dick threw himself down to avoid observation.

“ Only pricked my finger,” said Bessie ; but she was so agitated that the fussy young gentleman looked exceedingly puzzled — “ just go back and get my hat, William,”

“ It’s full of flowers,” said William.

“ Never mind, turn them out,” and the boy ran to fulfil her commands.

“ Bessie,” again whispered Dick.

“ Are you sure it’s Richard,” asked Bessie, pretending to gather hawthorn, that her friends might not discover her real occupation.

“ Yes, it’s Richard from Maryport — Richard, you know, who ran away from school.”

“ Dear, dear, how you frightened me,” said Bessie, her heart beating with joy.

“ Get away from those girls and boys,

so that I can talk to you. I daren't let them see me, because, because—" and Dick hesitated a moment for a reason—" because I have run away to see you."

Bessie started off as he finished, before William could return with her hat; and Richard Grey rose and watched her.

By and by the group was again scattered over the field, in search of a particular flower which Bessie had discovered, almost at the last moment, to be wanting. A group in which she was conspicuous made its way to a patch of wood, on the side nearest Richard, who at once crept back and entered the plantation, with its budding branches waving above the blue bells and the dead leaves.

Ere long Bessie separated herself from the rest, and Richard, darting out, close by her, kissed her before she could speak.

"Come along, come along," he said, taking her arm and putting it under his own, and they were soon out of hearing of the flower hunters.

"How tall you have grown, Richard, since we saw each other last," said Bessie, when they stopped.

"And how pretty you have grown, Bessie," said Richard; "sit down, Bess, and let's have a chat."

"I must only stay a few minutes, Richard. Besides, you cannot care much for talking to me; you have never answered my last letter, two years ago."

"How could I, Bess, I've had so much to do, and I've always been planning to meet you suddenly, you know; and, and—oh, I'm so glad to see you, Bessie."

"So glad, and yet you couldn't write one little letter."

"Never mind the letter-writing, Bessie—my Bessie."

"*My* Bessie, indeed," said the girl, removing his arm from her waist, with feigned anger.

"Yes, my Bessie—you ain't any other's Bessie,—eh?"

"I don't know that—I might be."

“ Might—yes; those eyes would make their way through a deal board.”

“ Would they, Master Flatterer?” said Bessie, smiling archly.

“ Yes, they would,” said Richard, taking a flower from her bouquet, and putting it into his button-hole.

What a pity that Richard Grey was a scoundrel! He really looked worthy of that pretty little gipsy. The wind was blowing through his fair hair (his cap lay upon the ground), and his blue eyes were sparkling, — ay, almost as brilliantly as Bessie’s own black ones, that expressed her admiration for the companion of her childhood.

“ But they are soon forgotten when the deal board goes away,” said Bessie, permitting Dick’s arm to encircle her once more.

“ Don’t say that, Bess; you don’t know how I’ve been thinking about you, and counting upon this meeting,” said Dick.

He was quite right. She did not know, seeing that he had not counted upon it at all, until Mat Dunkum had given him that glowing description of Mrs Beachstone's assistant, on board the yacht, and until he found himself lonely, and in want of a companion.

"But you ought to have written to me," said Bessie, conscious of what was due not only to her beauty, but to her love; for poor, vain, kind-hearted, generous little Bessie Martin always had loved Richard Grey.

"Well, then, I ought," said Dick, drawing her close to his side. "I ought, and I ask you to forgive me, you know. Will you, eh?"

"Yes," said Bessie, "I will."

"You know I always thought you the dearest, prettiest girl in all the world."

Bessie shook her head, and pretended not to believe this, which induced Richard to vow and protest all manner of things, declaring his everlasting devotion to her;

and, alas! for Bessie, she believed him.

At length Bessie said she really must go.

“And you ought not to kiss me, Richard; remember I am not a little girl now.”

She drew her lithe supple figure to its full height, and she certainly was not a little girl, but a sweet, pretty, blushing maiden. Better for her, perhaps, had there been no mirrors.

“But I am going to leave England, Bessie,” said Richard Grey.

“To leave England?” she repeated, and all the happy triumphant smile was gone.

“Yes.”

“When, when, Richard?”

“In a few days.”

Then Bessie looked sad, and the conversation became earnest and interesting. She told Richard her story, and Richard told her portions of his own.

He was not so pleased as she thought he might have been, when she told him that she was to be May-queen.

This, he told her, was only because he could not be there to see her. She wondered why he could not be there, and he soon satisfied her that he must not. He would wait for her when it was over, at all risks, and take her home. But somebody else, she said, would be sure to take her home—perhaps the rector's son.

When he heard this Richard almost vowed he would be there ; but he checked himself, and made Bessie promise that she would go home alone, if possible. And then they parted ; for voices, which they had heard in the distance, came nearer and nearer, until Richard was compelled to leave Bessie to the fussy young gentleman, and half-a-dozen girls, who had searched for her everywhere.

Never was such a bewildered, excited May-queen as Bessie Martin. The jolly old rector said to his wife that he was afraid distinction had turned poor Bessie's head. The rector's son from Oxford was delighted to have her for a partner, nevertheless, in

the country dance which closed the day's festivities ; and the fussy young gentleman gnashed his teeth, with inward rage and chagrin, at the snubbing Bessie had quietly given him, when he ventured to squeeze her hand in one of the early games.

It was nearly dark when the May-day festival was over ; and the fussy young gentleman, in his rage, had been bold enough to cut out the rector's son, by being first to offer himself as Bessie's escort home. But Bessie knew that a much handsomer fellow than either of them, and one she preferred to a hundred such, was waiting outside, and she soon found means to slip away alone.

Richard discovered a roundabout way to Bessie's home, and they lingered here and there on the way, always walking slowly.

There were no gas lamps within twenty miles of Helswick, and the night being dark, the young lovers were not interrupted by prying eyes. But when Bessie en-

tered old Beachstone's house, Mrs Beachstone was in the kitchen to receive her and to rebuke her for being out so late.

The next night, and the following night, Bessie was also talked to bed, in angry terms, by the same tongue. "What could the girl be thinking of, staying out until ten o'clock at night, and without being able to give any satisfactory explanation of where she had been?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

RICHARD GREY ASTONISHES MAT DUNKUM.

At the end of the week, when Mat Dunkum returned to the caverns, he found Richard Grey comfortably ensconced in the cottage. Richard said the house was warmer, and more civilized. The cavern parlour had given him the blues. No, he had not been reading much: the books which Mat noticed were from Beachstone's.

"And is this from Beachstone's?" asked Mat, stooping to pick up a pink ribbon, fastened to a little jet brooch, that lay upon the floor.

Richard Grey snatched at the trinket, without responding to Mat's laughter.

“Softly, softly,” said Mat, holding the ribbon above Richard’s head.

Richard looked sullenly upwards, and eventually Mat dropped the waif upon the table, and Richard put it into his pocket.

“Well, I’ll not be inquisitive,” said Mat, sitting down astride a chair, and looking at his *protégé*.

“You needn’t,” said Richard, upon whose cheeks there was a little extra colour.

“Very well, then, I won’t; but it ain’t the thing, you know, to be having visitors when the master of the house is away—ah, ah, ah,” and Mat laughed at Richard.

After a momentary consideration, whether he should laugh or be angry, Richard joined in Mat’s rough guffaw.

“Now, then, tell us your news, and never mind my visitor,” said Richard.

“Well, then, what would you like it to be?”

“I don’t care a button,” said Dick,

putting his hands into his pockets, and singing a stanza of the song which was held in such high favour at Keem's Harmonic Bowers.

"You don't care?"

"Not a stiver, not a farthing."

"Very well, then, I've put everything all straight for you at Maryport; and I've made arrangements for the future. Your brother Frank has got you a place as a kind of inspector in America for Welford and Co., and—"

"Blow my brother Frank — hang Welford and Co.," exclaimed Richard Grey, with a contemptuous toss of the head.

"You may blow and hang who you like," said Mat; "I've done my best for you."

"And bad's the best, if that's it," said Richard.

"I thought you didn't care a button just now how it was to be?"

"No more I don't."

“And yet you arn’t satisfied.”

“No—I am satisfied with you, you know, Mat—much obliged to you, and all that; but blow my brother Frank and that humbug, Welford.”

“All right; then you won’t have the situation?”

“O, I’ll have it,” said Richard, as though he were conferring a great favour upon his brother and the Messrs Welford and Co., and upon Mat too. “I’ll have it. They’ll pay my fare out, I suppose?”

“They’ll pay your fare, and do what is handsome in every way.”

“What salary will they give me?”

“They didn’t say how much; but I understood from your brother that Mr Welford had said he would see to that himself.”

“Oh, indeed!”

“Yes; and your brother seemed to think that Mr Welford was showing a very

great interest in you to have troubled himself so far in the matter."

"I dare say; I never thought so much of Welford as Frank does. And when am I to go?"

"You can bid your mother good-bye in two days from now, and I'm to put you aboard ship at Liverpool."

"Oh!" ejaculated Richard.

"You're a cool hand as ever I came across," said Mat, looking at Dick with what would have been an admiring smile, had not Mat felt a little annoyed.

"Am I?"

"Yes; you don't ask me how I've managed to get you out of the Commodore's clutches."

"Oh, that beggar Barns, you mean—who cares for him?"

"Cares! well, nobody as I know of," said Mat; "but there was a warrant out against you, Dick."

"Ah, I forgot that—is it out now?—is it coming here?—will it be at home on Sunday if I should call?"

"You certainly are a stunner; but I think I'd rather you weren't quite such a stunner," said Mat, looking at Richard thoughtfully.

Dick snapped his fingers, and roared out, at the top of his voice—

Let's be merry while we can,
Every jovial fellow,
Ne'er a lad will be a man
Unless he's sometimes mellow.
Fill your cups up to the brim,
Drain your flowing glasses,
Down with him, who, sink or swim,
Will not pledge the lasses.

Mat sat staring at his protégé in amazement, until he was called upon to join in the chorus.

"No, no—look here, Dick; what the blazes is the good of this nonsense?"

"Why you're getting savage, Captain," said Richard.

"No, I'm not; but when a fellow's been doing his best to get you out of a scrape, you might listen to what he's got to say."

"Right you are: well, and what about the warrant, Captain?"

"Why, Barns has given up the prosecution, and you are free."

"Hooray!" exclaimed Dick, with mock enthusiasm.

Mat said no more; but commenced to light his pipe. We shall leave him to smoke it.

Richard Grey, you see, received Mat's news with utter indifference.

On the next evening he took leave of Bessie Martin.

"You will write to me very, very often," she said, trembling on his arm, whilst the sea was moaning under the starlight.

"Oh, yes, of course," Dick replied, "I'll write, you know."

"How often, Richard?" she asked, in her soft little trusting voice.

"Well, how often would you like me to write, Bess?"

"I dare not say how often," was the reply.

"Once a month?" asked Richard, carelessly.

Bessie had thought of saying once a week; she was glad she had not said so.

"Once a month, sweetheart?" Richard asked again.

"Yes," said Bessie. "And how long will you be away, Richard?"

"I don't know, Bess—perhaps a year."

"Oh, it seems such a long time, such a very long time," said Bessie.

"Perhaps I shan't be away more than six or nine months."

"And we are to be married when you come back, and never, never to be parted any more?"

"That's it," said Richard, "I'll get some money, you know, and then I'll come back, and we'll have the bells rung, and——"

The sea was so boisterous that its roar drowned the remainder of the sentence. But it did not drown the voice of Mrs Beachstone that night, when Bessie re-

turned. If she did not alter, Bessie Martin should stay in that house no longer; she would not permit her to be out after dark; such a beautiful night, indeed. Well, only let her commands be disobeyed once more, and then Bessie should see whether it was a beautiful night.

The little assistant did not disobey Mrs Beachstone again for months, but the time did come when visitors at Helswick saw those black eyes, and those glossy curls no longer behind Mr Beachstone's counter. We shall have to tell indeed how poor Bessie ran away, as many another girl had done before her; how she had not sufficient strength of character to bear the trouble that fell upon her; and how it overset the little brain, as many another brain had been overset.

The intelligent reader will almost be prepared to learn that Richard Grey broke his promise to Bessie Martin the first month. When he reached his journey's end, he would write to her immediately,

Bessie thought—write a fond, tender letter that she would carry about in her bosom.

Richard Grey did nothing of the sort; it was quite a month after his arrival before he wrote, and when the letter was put into those eager, trembling hands that were stretched over Mr Beachstone's counter to receive it, what was it?

Only a few hurried lines, badly written, and nothing like a love-letter. He had had a good deal of bother, Richard told her; it was a queer racketty place, this New York, and he thought he had better have gone for a soldier. However he had given up his situation under Welford and Co.—he didn't like it—he never had liked anybody connected with Welford. He should have been worked to death, one way and another, if he hadn't given it up.

He had thought of going back to England once or twice already; he didn't think he could do much good in New York, everybody was in such a deuce of a

hurry to make money there, that he didn't think there was much chance for him.

Perhaps Bessie would expect this to be a love-letter of the old sort, which he wrote when he was a boy, and had just left Helswick. But he really hadn't time to write about love, and all that—though of course he did love her—and she must excuse him. Didn't know what Bessie would find to write about, but if she liked she might tell him all about the people at Denby Rise, as she was so close to the house where his mother lived.

We have not patience to report what more there was in this vulgar, lazy letter.

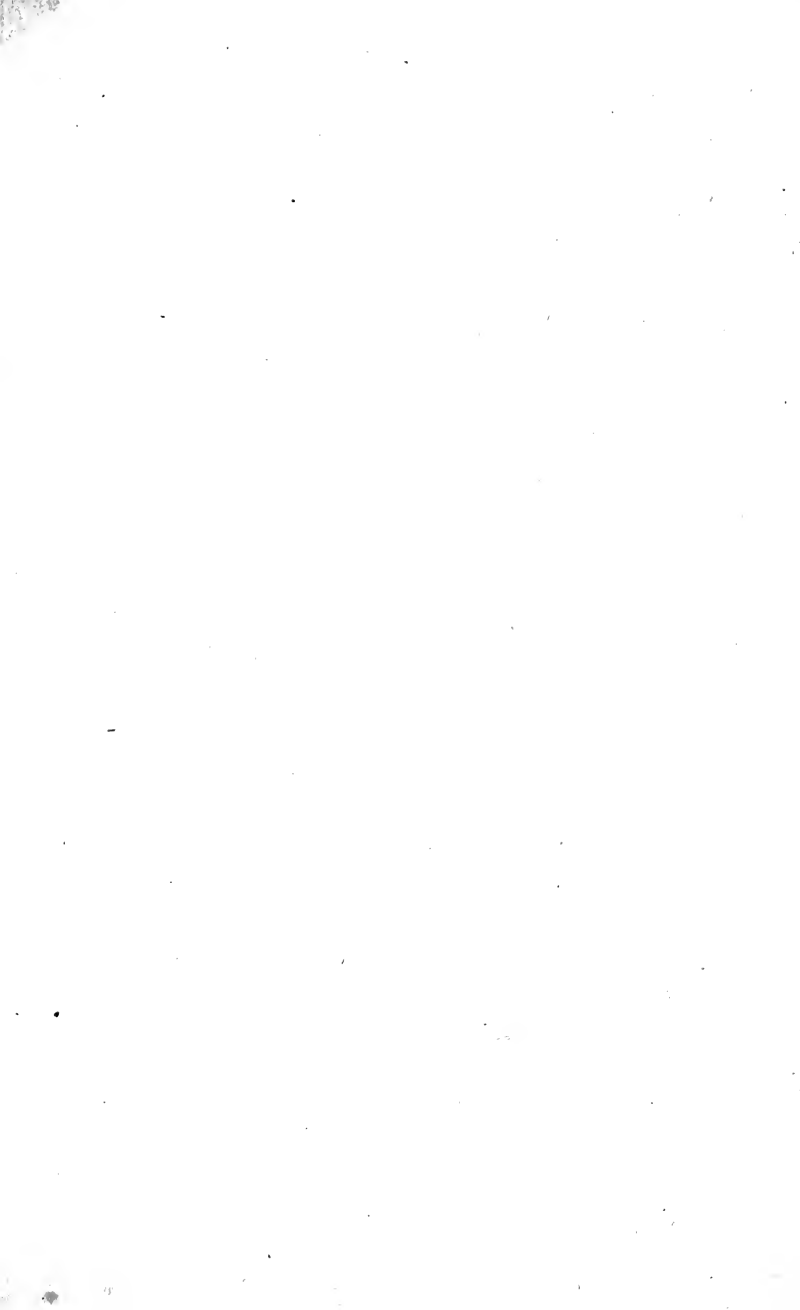
We know that the same post carried a wretched scrawl from the same quarter to Mrs Grey, asking for money, which was despatched to New York that same day. We also know that Mrs Grey cried over the letter she had received, and that it kept her awake all night. Welford and Co. did not like her son Richard, she was sure, working him so very hard. She al-

most wished now that he had sought a situation for himself, and had nothing more to do with Welford. It was no use talking to Frank about the matter, Frank did not understand the boy's nature. And the mother's heart yearned to her youngest son, yearned to comfort him in the distant land.

Bessie Martin could scarcely comprehend Richard's letter; but there were one or two loving words in it, and if there were no more, was he not sorely troubled? had he not been overworked? and was he not already thinking of coming back to his Bessie?

So, at night, the vulgar, ill-written, ungrammatical letter was placed under Bessie's pillow, and in the day time it rested next her poor little fluttering heart.

END OF VOL. I.







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